

THE DECLINE OF
FRENCH DEMOCRACY

American Council on Public Affairs

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THE DECLINE OF FRENCH DEMOCRACY

The Beginning of National Disintegration

By MARY E. WEYER

INTRODUCTION

By ANDRÉ MAUROIS



American Council on Public Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

Nothing is more interesting than to compare the political and moral attitude of France in 1914 with her 1939 attitude. The following account of the *union sacrée* of 1914, an account written with an accuracy and an objectivity worthy of very high praise, helps to understand what happened in 1939. Reading it carefully, one is reminded of the fact that the politicians of 1914 were, at first, no better than the politicians of 1939, that most of them showed themselves just as selfish and biased, that even Clémenceau himself—later the saviour of his country—did not behave too well during the first weeks of the war.

When war was declared in 1914, France's sacred union movement seemed truly inspiring but it did not last very long. Very soon the petty intrigues, the jealousies, the plots, became just as unpleasant as in peace time. Why then was the final result a victory in 1918, a defeat in 1940?

a) Because, in 1914, human passions and sentiments were left to themselves. There was no well-organized foreign propaganda, ready to make capital out of jealousies and hatred. In 1939, Russian and German propaganda stirred up additional trouble.

b) Because, in 1914, real warfare began at once and compelled soldiers and civilians to forget politics and to think mainly of armaments and tactics. In 1939, it was the long period of inaction that deteriorated the morale of the armies and of the nation.

c) Because the majority of Frenchmen understood much better the origins of the war in 1914. Then war had been declared by Germany, and the French soil invaded. In 1939, Germany had been clever enough to find an indirect way of compelling France to declare war herself.

d) Because the forces prevailing were very different. In 1914, backed by Russia, Japan, Great Britain, Belgium, Serbia, and soon by Italy, France felt she had a fair chance of winning the war. In 1939, she was conscious of the weakness of the Allied forces.

Therefore it cannot be said that the *union sacrée* was the main cause of victory. But it must be acknowledged that men like Clémenceau and Poincaré showed, in moments of great peril, more generosity than their successors. And it must be remembered that the French people remained true to their country because their minds had not been poisoned by foreign propaganda.

ANDRÉ MAUROIS

Chapter I

FRANCE IN 1914

In the year 1914, the year of the outbreak of the first World War, France was not considered by world opinion to be in a very healthy state. Chronic crises of Cabinets had created an impression of governmental instability. An increasing debt, failure to pass and enforce adequate taxation laws, and rising deficits made observers have doubts regarding the financial strength of the country. Moreover, the failure of the nation to adapt itself to the modern industrial revolution in its super-mechanized form had created a fear among the friends of France regarding her vitality—a fear which was constantly encouraged by the published statistics of the French birth rate.

Though a few commentators like Abbé Dimnet¹ and Agathon² discovered signs of a national revival in the political and social attitude of the youth of France, this optimism was not shared by the majority of impartial observers. In fact, the actual political and social divisions of France, as they were reflected in the hotly-contested election to the Chamber of Deputies on April 26th and May 10th, 1914, seem to justify much more a feeling of pessimism than one of confidence in the future of France. For in this election the two reforms upon which the proponents of a strong France based most of their hopes for a revived France, namely, the three-year military law and proportional representation, were defeated by the considered vote of the French electorate.

The key to the election of 1914 is found in the political development of France since the Dreyfus affair. This latter political upheaval had resulted in the control of the government by a combination of Radical political groups—the Moderate Republicans, the Radical-Socialists, and the Socialists. For five years this Leftist coalition had been cemented together by a common opposition to the political influence of the Catholic Church in France. Believing to have accomplished their mission by anti-clerical legislation which culminated in the separation law, first the Socialists and then many Moderate Republicans had retaken their freedom of action. The vituperative Clemenceau with his assertive individualism was not the person to heal this break between Socialists and Radicals during his term as Prime Minister from 1906 to 1909. In fact, his ruthless suppression of strikes made him lose all possible Socialist support and forced him to gather to his majority Conservative Deputies. During the 1910–1914 legislature this antagonism between the Radicals and Socialists seemed to have become

¹ Dimnet, Abbé, *France Herself Again* (London, 1913).

² Agathon, *Les Jeunes Gens d'Aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1912).

definitive through the appearance of the issue of proportional representation. The Socialists saw a chance to increase their influence in Parliament and to liberate themselves from an electoral alliance with the Radicals in the enactment of proportional representation, while the Radicals, with their strong local party organization, opposed any change in electoral legislation which would decrease the number of their Deputies. Consequently the political life in France between 1910 and 1914 seemed to be centered in the mutual denunciations of Radicals and Socialists.

This division of the Leftist groups resulted in the return of the Conservative Republicans to power. Not only was Poincaré elected as President of the Republic, but a Conservative Ministry was established under Barthou.³ The Conservatives were further able to take advantage of the situation by passing the three-year military service law. This control of the state by the Conservatives and the passing of so-called "reactionary" legislation made the Radical groups realize that unity in the progressive camp was a necessity of self-preservation. Thus before the election of 1914 the old Leftist coalition of the Dreyfus affair was resurrected. In December 1913, the revived Left overthrew Barthou and put into power their own Ministry, headed by Doumergue. Battle lines were now definitely drawn for the election of 1914.

On one side were the Socialists and Radicals opposed to the "reactionary danger"; on the other were all the Conservative groups united in a common front against the "red menace," but the issue which divided Conservatives and Radicals was above all the support of, or opposition to, the three-year military service. As far as proportional representation was concerned the Radical forces tried to ignore it, since it divided them, but the Conservatives insisted that a vote against this reform was a vote against "good" government. Consequently the three-year military law remained as the only clear cut issue of the election, whose outcome indicated that in spite of the increasing tension in international affairs in 1914, the majority of French voters were opposed to an extra year of service in the army.

Of the 11,177,499 registered voters of France, 8,343,346 voted in 1914. According to the official election returns the votes and the Deputies might be distributed among seven political groups as follows.⁴

| <i>Groups</i> | <i>Votes</i> | <i>Deputies</i> |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Royalists—Catholics | 1,297,722 | 73 |
| Conservatives | 810,679 | 56 |
| Conservative Republicans | 1,564,447 | 94 |
| Moderate Republicans | 1,396,447 | 96 |
| Radical-Socialists | 1,496,058 | 103 |
| Republican Socialists | 323,326 | 27 |
| Social Democrats | 1,408,114 | 103 |
| Miscellaneous | 46,422 | |

³ Soltau, Roger, *French Parties and Politics* (London, 1922), p. 50.

⁴ Lachapelle, G., *Les Elections Legislatives* (Paris, 1914), p. 8.

Since most of the Moderate Republicans were elected with the support of Radicals and Socialists, it might be expected that they would transfer their electoral alliance to the Parliament and vote with the other Leftist groups. Thus the Radical forces could assert that they had received the support of 4,623,945 Frenchmen against 3,672,979 who voted for the Conservative parties. As far as the representation in Parliament was concerned, the difference was even greater, for the Left hoped to obtain the votes of 363 Deputies with only 223 definitely in opposition to them.⁵

Such a division might represent the Conservative and Radical sentiments of the electorate, but the Deputies of the people, as members of political groups, represented eight main factions of Conservatism or Radicalism—factions which dominated and complicated Parliamentary life, and for this reason should be described.

For convenience sake both the Royalists and Imperialists might be discussed together. Though they had separate party organizations outside of Parliament—the Royalists supporting the Duke of Orléans, and the Imperialists, Victor Napoléon—they had anti-Republican aims in common. However, they were of little real political significance and so were not taken very seriously either inside or outside of the Chamber of Deputies, but papers such as *l'Action Française* and writers like Charles Maurras served to keep the anti-Republican cause before the public eye. The *Action Libérale Populaire*, the Catholic Party, was the real backbone of the "Right." Nominally it accepted the republic, but desired to reconcile the interests of the Catholic Church with republicanism by repealing the anti-clerical legislation. The Conservatives polled nearly 1,300,000 votes which, however, were so scattered that they had only 73 Deputies. Their support of proportional representation was easily understood, therefore.

The truly republican Conservatives were divided into factions created largely for personal, and not for ideological, reasons. The adherents of the Republican Federation were considered the most conservative, being descended from the Moderates who governed France from 1878-1898. Officially it was the most strongly individualistic party, being attached to the principles of *laissez-faire* and personal liberty. The remaining Conservatives were hardly organized, though some form of program was furnished by the *Fédération des Gauches*, which had been founded in 1913 by Briand in line with his policy of pacification and conciliation. It had practically the same policies as the older Democratic Republican Party, but was to resist, not the old danger on the Right, but the "exaggerated hostility" of the Radical-Socialists and Unified Socialists toward the Catholic Church and the Army. It maintained no organization after this campaign.

The group of Deputies known as Moderate Republicans were mostly

⁵ Though the victory of the Left was disputed by many Conservatives, even A. Ribot noted in his *Journal* (Paris, 1936, p. 4): "*Violè une terrible poussée vers le socialisme.*"

local notables, who, because of their personal popularity had obtained most of the progressive votes, but were usually elected only at a *ballotage* with the help of the organized Radical-Socialist groups. In a way, these Deputies represented the average Frenchman who, mainly interested in earning a living, did not care about politics, but at the same time feared a possible reaction to a monarchy more than a development towards the Left. A moderately well-off landowner, a good lawyer or judge, a popular doctor, such people with a good deal of "common sense" seemed to these average Frenchmen the proper persons to watch over the political future of France.

The Radical-Socialists had purified themselves during the last few years by founding a new Unified Radical Socialist Party from which all "nominal" radicals, who had joined the party for personal advantage since the Dreyfus affair, were excluded. The old anti-clerical principles were again asserted, and because of an alliance with the Socialists, social legislation was emphasized more than before. The main supporters of the group were found among the lower middle class and among the peasants of Southern France. Shopkeepers who feared the competition of department stores, artisans who were losing work through machine competition, peasants who believed that they lost their profits to the middle man, such people listened avidly to the threats of Radical-Socialist politicians against the "financial oligarchy" which controlled the country.

The Socialist-Republican Party was a rather motley collection of twenty-three Deputies, whose political views were supposed to fall some place between those of the Radical-Socialists and the Unified Socialists. Because of personal ambitions their holders preferred to form a separate party. In their electoral programs, most of the Deputies of their group supported such measures as secular education, qualified collective ownership, and two-year military service, but individually they might, if their interest seemed to demand it, support the direct opposite of such reform—Viviani, for instance, supporting the three-year military law after the elections.

The Unified Socialist Party was openly opposed to the capitalistic order and allied with the International Socialist Party, calling itself a party of class struggle and revolution. In the congress of 1905 it declared that the Socialist Party "remains always a party of fundamental and irreducible opposition to the whole bourgeois class and to the state which is the instrument of that class . . . The Socialist group in Parliament should withhold from the government all the means which insure the domination of the bourgeoisie and its maintenance in power." Consequently the Socialist Deputies refused to vote for military appropriations, appropriations for colonial conquest, secret funds, and the budget. The party stood for immediate return to the two-year service law and gradual substitution of a militia for the regular army, expressing an abhorrence of nationalism and

militarism and advocating a Franco-German *rapprochement* which would permit a definite alliance between England, France, and Germany—a combination believed necessary for the peace of the world. The Unified Socialists obtained 103 seats in the election of 1914, which made them numerically the strongest group in the Parliament.⁶

Though the Conservatives had been defeated in the election of 1914 and were not in control of the Chamber of Deputies, nevertheless they had a strong ally in the President of the Republic, the Conservative Poincaré. Poincaré felt that any change in the military law would weaken France's international position, and since he saw clearly the growing tensions in European diplomacy, he grew to believe that such a change might even entail the destruction of France.⁷

To make the political situation even more muddled, the Doumergue Cabinet resigned in June. Though nominally Radical-Socialist, Doumergue and his colleagues seemed to have hesitated to apply a repeal of the three-year military law as demanded by the electorate and were glad to leave office on the excuse that the aim of the Cabinet had been achieved with the election. Doumergue probably felt that the new Cabinet should now be given liberty to find a Ministry more suited to its political tendencies. Thus, when the new legislature opened on June 1, 1914, a struggle was impending between the Conservative President of the Republic and the Radical Chamber regarding the three-year military law.⁸

⁶ This summary of French political parties is a synopsis of various commentators on French politics. I have found most useful: Sait, E. M., *Government and Politics of France* (New York, 1926), pp. 359-372; Bourgin, G., *Manuel des Partis Politiques en France* (Paris, 1928); Siegfried, A., *Tableau des Partis en France* (Paris, 1930); Middleton, W. L., *The French Political System* (London, 1932); Ogg, F. A., and Beard, C. R., *National Governments and the World War* (New York, 1923).

⁷ The general impression of victory for the Left appears also in Ribot's *Journal*. Thus on April 30th he wrote of the elections: "*Elles sont décidément mauvaises et je crains que nous ne sortions pas des difficultés.*" On May 3rd the Conservative Republican fear is found in his words: "*Les radicaux-socialistes font partout alliance avec les socialistes. Comme, d'autre part, Briand et Barthou ne peuvent pas faire alliance—du moins, ouvertement—avec la droite, ils vont se trouver très empêchés de reprendre le pouvoir.*" On May 8 he wrote: "*M. de Freycinet se demande, comme Lavis, où nous allons et comment on pourra constituer un gouvernement ayant un peu de stabilité.*" And then on May 11, after the "ballotage" he wrote: "*Les élections d'hier sont bien ce que nous avions prévu. Voilà une terrible poussée vers le socialisme.*" (Ribot, A., *Journal* (Paris, 1936), pp. 1-5.)

Poincaré, in his *Memoirs*, is strangely silent on his reactions to the election but implied in his text appear his fears. In regard to the three-year law he wrote, "*L'état de l'Europe nous interdit évidemment d'affaiblir nos moyens de défense.*" (Poincaré, R., *Au service de la France* (Paris, 1927), Vol. IV, p. 121.)

⁸ In the newspapers the victorious Radical politicians gloated over their victory, and the Conservatives spent their time in mutual recriminations. Poincaré described the situation well when he wrote: "*Des Journaux surexcités par la bataille m'adressent sans ménagements des reproches contradictoires. Les feuilles réactionnaires blament vertement ma neutralité et affectent de ne pas comprendre pourquoi je ne suis pas intervenu, de toute mon autorité nominale pour décider le ministre de l'Intérieur et le gouvernement tout entier à*

Some order had to be established in this chaos and so Poincaré, whose duty it was to select the Prime Minister, turned first to the Socialist Republican, Viviani, feeling that the latter would be able to get the Leftist support because of his party affiliation, in spite of his opposition to a change in the military service law. This plan seemed acceptable at first, but the Radicals were not yet ready to accept a compromise in view of the support the French electorate had just given them at the polls—a support which had seemed to endorse their antagonistic attitude toward the military service law. Therefore, the Radical bourgeois, whom Viviani approached first in his efforts to form a Cabinet, refused to cooperate, giving the explanation that Viviani's military policy would expose the new Cabinet to attacks from all parties and would please no one. For several days Viviani tried to convince the Radicals of their "duty," but in the end he was no nearer to a solution and had to give up his attempt to form a Cabinet.⁹

Despite the fact that Viviani's failure had been entirely due to his Conservative attitude on the military law, Poincaré was not yet ready to abandon his own policy and ask a Radical-Socialist to form a Ministry. If one combination would not work, perhaps another would. He therefore continued to ignore the Radical Socialists and appealed successively to Deschanel, Delcassé, Clementel, Dupuy, and Peytral—all members of the Center. All refused, however.¹⁰

Finally, on June 11th Poincaré turned to his close friend Ribot, who was also a Conservative, but whom he hoped others would consider to stand above parties. He felt that the venerable reputation of Ribot connected with his many years of service in the French Parliament might rally a patriotic majority. Moreover, as a sop to Leftist sentiment, a promise to put through an income tax might be incorporated in the Cabinet's program.¹¹ These plans, however, failed to turn out successfully. Unable to obtain any Radical support, Ribot was forced to form a Conservative government, and in spite of fervent appeals to the patriotism of the Depu-

exercer sur la consultation du pays une influence modératrice. M. Clemenceau triomphe. Il chante dans "l'Homme libre" la défaite de 'M. Briand et de ses alliés de droite.' Il me représente ballotté entre Charlotte et mathurine. Il me consacre chaque matin deux longues colonnes d'ironie amère et condensée. Je ne puis répondre à personne. J'ai les mains liées et la bouche muette. Charmant apanage de ma dignité présidentielle: je dois rester impassible et considérer, dans un sombre silence, ceux qui agissent et qui parlent." (Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 120.) The same tendency was noted by Ribot, "*Clemenceau poursuit dans 'l'Homme libre' sa campagne contre Briand et contre le président de la République; il est de plus en plus vif.*" (Ribot, A., *op. cit.*, p. 3.)

⁹ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 145-151.

¹⁰ Deschanel preferred to remain President of the Chamber of Deputies; Delcassé's state of health at the time would not permit his formation of a Cabinet. (Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 153-169.)

¹¹ Ribot, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 8-17.

ties, he was overthrown by the Leftist forces on his first appearance in the Chamber on June 12th.¹² Therefore, in a final attempt to save the three-year military law, Poincaré again turned to Viviani on June 15th. This time he was not to be disappointed. Viviani was able to form a Ministry with Radical-Socialist support despite his conciliatory policy, which was a definite compromise with the Center, since it wished to maintain three-year military service. By a vote of 370 to 137 a new Cabinet was finally lodged in office.¹³

As is usually the case with the formation of a new French Ministry, Viviani's Cabinet was much like that of his predecessor, including seven of Doumergue's Ministers; it had, however, fewer Radical-Socialists and more representatives of the Moderate Left. As finally drawn up, it included two Socialist Republicans, four Radical-Socialists, one member of the Radical Left, three of the Democratic Left, and two Moderate Republicans.¹⁴ Oddly enough, after the French electorate had signified by their vote a desire for the repeal of the three-year service law, more than half of the new Ministers had voted for this law of August 7th, 1913. Though Viviani was personally in favor of the three year military law, he decided to yield partially to the sentiment of the Left. In his Ministerial declaration he promised not only the enactment of an income tax, but in regard to the three-year military service law he suggested the temporary enactment of the law, subject to discussion by Parliament. Thus the Left might claim a partial verbal success, but the actual victory was with Poincaré and the defenders of the new military law. The Socialists, however, were not to be won over by this verbal quibble, and they furnished most of the 137 votes which were cast in opposition to the new Ministry.

It was a very precarious majority which the Viviani government was able

¹² The fighting temper of the Left was indicated by a definite assertion of the supremacy of the legislature over the executive. A resolution was passed which was without precedent in previous parliamentary experience. It stated: "The Chambers, respectful of the wishes of universal suffrage, are resolved to give their confidence only to a cabinet capable of joining a majority of the Left." Lavissee, E., *Histoire de France Contemporaine* (Paris, 1921), pp. 287-288.

¹³ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 164-166.

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| ¹⁴ President | Viviani | Socialist-Republican |
| Public Instruction | Augagneur | Socialist-Republican |
| Interior | Malvy | Radical-Socialist |
| Finance | Noulens | Radical Left |
| War | Messimy | Radical-Socialist |
| Public Works | Renoult | Radical-Socialist |
| Commerce | Thomson | Moderate Republican |
| Agriculture | David | Moderate Republican |
| Colonies | Raynaud | Democratic Left |
| Work | Couyba | Democratic Left |
| Marine | Gauthier | Democratic Left |
| Justice | Bienvenu-Martin | Radical-Socialist |

to command. Radicals of all descriptions were naturally suspicious and were clearly tolerating the Cabinet only temporarily. The Socialists had already declared their opposition. The Conservatives looked upon Viviani's Radical colleagues with suspicion. To most observers the new Cabinet was clearly a make-shift until the time when the political tendencies of the Chamber were more clear cut. The resulting uncertainty therefore did not give an encouraging outlook for a stable government in France. And it was this Viviani Cabinet that headed the French nation during the nerve-wracking days of the July crisis—when, above all else, a firm governmental policy was needed, a policy which had the support of the entire country behind it. Poincaré had won his victory and the three-year military law was safe. The question remained whether or not his policy had resulted in the formation of a Cabinet for the best interests of France.

Chapter II

THE ASSASSINATION OF JAURÈS

On June 28th, just two weeks after Viviani had finally constituted his Cabinet, came the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Serajevo—the spark that set off the series of international crises culminating in the First World War. Tortuous diplomatic negotiations between the various diplomats of Europe to preserve peace proved futile; on July 23rd, Austria sent an ultimatum to Serbia, which was accepted by Serbia only provisionally. On July 28th, came the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia, followed two days later by Russian general mobilization, in action tantamount to a declaration of war. On July 31st, Germany, Austria's ally, demanded Russian demobilization and French pledges of neutrality. The Russian refusal resulted in a state of war between Germany and Russia on August 1st; the politic reply of the French that they would take such action as their interests might require brought a declaration of war from Germany on August 3rd. France's actions during these first hectic days are not to be judged here, as they are not directly connected with this subject. As far as the French nation was concerned, regardless of any governmental policy, it saw only the fact that Germany had declared war on France.

The political situation in France was complicated on July 31st by the murder of Jean Jaurès, the outstanding orator and inspiration of the Socialist Party—the only party in France whose support in time of war was yet an undetermined factor. Jaurès was a strong advocate of pacifism and internationalism; in fact his bitter attacks on militarism had aroused the resentment that prompted his murder. The assassin, Raoul Villain, was a neurotic, excitable boy who had been spurred on by the political propaganda of such writers as Charles Maurras in *l'Action Française*, who had charged that Jaurès' opposition to the three year law made him a traitor to France.¹

¹ The assassination took place in the Restaurant du Croissant, where Jaurès had stopped with several of his friends after returning from an interview with Viviani. Villain fired twice through the open window, both bullets striking their mark so that Jaurès died in less than ten minutes. When seized Villain cried, "*C'est pour les deux ans.*" (*Le Journal*, August 1st.)

Charles Rappoport in his book, *Jean Jaurès* (Paris, 1925, p. 82) shows how Maurras had edited part of a statement of Guesde to make it sound as though Guesde accused Jaurès of treason toward France: "*Cependant, après le Congrès socialiste du 14-18 juillet 1914, l'animosité de la presse réactionnaire souffle en tempête. Elle dénature et falsifie une parole de Jules Guesde prétendant, contre Jaurès, que la grève générale, même internationale et simultanée, serait un crime de haute trahison contre le socialisme. Elle couple les mots 'contre le socialisme' pour pouvoir déclarer que Jules Guesde accusait Jaurès de trahison envers*

The assassination of any political leader of the importance of Jaurès would have been an exceedingly distressing burden for the government to bear just at this most critical time when national unity was so urgently needed, but the murder of Jaurès himself was capable of having particularly disastrous effects. He was the leader of the Unified Socialists, the support of whose 103 Deputies was essential for unified action in time of war; he was the leader of the party which, more than any other, stood for non-cooperation with the government, for pacifism, and above all, for internationalism. Moreover, the members of the Socialist Party were concentrated in the cities of France, especially Paris, and the attitude of the easily-aroused Paris mob is always a rather unpredictable force to be reckoned with.

The probable attitude of the Socialist Party toward war was still a very undeterminable factor in the national mind at the time of the murder of its leader. The French Socialists, under the leadership of Jaurès, had decided as far back as the Congress of Limoges in 1906 that they would oppose all aggressive action by France, but that they would support the government in the defense of the country if France were attacked. Their problem in 1914, therefore, was to decide which nation was the aggressor. It was Jaurès to whom the Socialists had turned for advice, and he had advocated a policy for patriotism and peace alike, insisting in May, at the Congress of Amiens, that although the Socialists would strive for peace, they would "not abandon without combat a single inch of France's territory, not a single paving stone of her streets, not a single fragment of her soil."²

Between June 30th and July 25th Jaurès had made strenuous appeals for peace, at the same time blaming Austria and Germany for the situation that had arisen and approving France's partial *couverture*, preparations comparable to partial mobilization. On July 25th, 27th, 28th, and at the International Socialist Bureau at Brussels on July 29th, Jaurès urged the workers to protest against war and to support all attempts at mediation. But in all his appeals for peace he had never mentioned a general strike, for he believed that the French government had no aggressive intentions and no responsibility for the crisis. Moreover, at the Brussels meeting, when the German Socialists asked the French if they would act with them in signifying their disapproval of the war by rejecting war credits, the French Socialists replied that if France were attacked, they would vote the credits, and the only condition they would impose would be "that the

la France. Voici un spécimen de cette polémique meurtrière et criminelle. C'est M. Charles Maurras, dans l'Action Française du 18 juillet 1914 qui écrit, sous le titre: 'Le sérieux du régime': 'M. Jules Guesde a accusé M. Jaurès de haute trahison. C'était bien dit. Mais qu'a-t-il fait, Va-t-il se séparer de ce traître?'

² Quoted from *l'Humanité*, August 27th, May 25th, 1914 by Weinstein, H. R., *Jean Jaurès* (New York, 1936), p. 178.

French government must give evidence of its peaceful intention." On the morning of July 31st, Jaurès was still striving for peace. He led a delegation of Socialist Deputies to ask the Prime Minister to use a firm tone with Russia, and he begged him not to abandon himself to a belief that war was inevitable.³

One can easily understand, therefore, the anxiety of the French government over Jaurès' assassination. It knew only too well the importance, indeed the absolute necessity of a tactful handling by the French press of the Jaurès tragedy. The international situation demanded above all else that complete national union must be obtained, but all realized that there were potentialities in this unexpected and unfortunate turn of affairs that could—and did—prove disastrous to any hope of such a cooperation.

Thus, while everyone suspected strongly that the murder was in reality a political one and that the leaders of the Conservative Party, Maurras especially, were just as guilty as though they had each fired a shot, nevertheless no hint of this was allowed to appear in the press.⁴ In any event the fact had to be kept from the public that Villain, the actual assassin, had formerly been a member of the *Action Française*, where he had been greatly excited by the nationalistic outbursts of Maurras, who had more than once stated in no uncertain terms that a move against Jaurès would be a move for the welfare of all.⁵

The press in general, therefore, directed its main efforts toward ridding the people of any suspicion that politics or the government had had anything at all to do with the Jaurès murder. Thus all the names of the Deputies who had visited Mme. Jaurès were published and the fact was stressed that the register at the home had the signatures of a great number of representatives of Rightist parties.⁶ *Le Temps* was the only paper which made any direct reference at all to the political aspects of the assassination; it stated simply that whereas there had been some who had blamed the deed on some political party, the murder was now clearly evident to be entirely the work of a mentally deranged young man.⁷

The news of the tragedy caused the government at once to think with

³ Weinstein, H. R., *op. cit.*, pp. 178-184.

⁴ The fear that the murder had been a political one is seen in Poincaré's memoirs for July 31st, 1914. "Pendant la séance du conseil, le préfet de police, M. Hennion, nous informe que Jean Jaurès vient d'être assassiné dans un café. Par qui? Par un fou? ou par un adversaire politique aveugle de fanatisme?" (Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 474.)

⁵ Rappoport, Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

⁶ *Le Figaro*, August 2nd.

⁷ *Le Temps*, August 2nd. "Dans le premier moment du l'on apprît la mort de M. Jaurès, quelques personnes trop échauffées croyaient pouvoir rattacher cet événement à l'action de tel ou tel parti. Il suffisait de réfléchir et de garder un peu de sangfroid pour repousser d'aussi odieuses insinuations. On a su bientôt d'ailleurs que le crime était l'oeuvre d'un jeune homme, un exalté, qui ne s'est inspiré que de lui-même, et dont l'atavisme ne semble pas net au point de vue de l'équilibre mental puisqu'il a sa mère enfermée dans une maison de santé."

grave misgivings of the possible reception Paris might accord it. It was impossible to gauge what the reaction would be, and the outlook certainly was not encouraging. Along with the first press announcement of the assassination, therefore, came an appeal from Viviani to the Parisian population, asking for their cooperation and *sangfroid*.

"In the grave circumstances which traverse the nation, the government counts on the patriotism of the working class, of all the population, to remain calm and not to add to public commotion by an agitation that might throw the capital into discord. The assassin is arrested and will be punished. Let us all have confidence in the law, and let us give in these grave perils an example of self-control and union."⁸

At the same time, at the request of the Prefect of Police of Paris, who also feared disorder, the government held back the Parisian cavalry brigade which was about to be sent to the French Eastern frontier. Despite all previous fears to the contrary, however, the response of the Parisian population was all that could have been desired. On the next day, August 2nd, therefore, the Prefect decided that there was no need to detain further the brigade, and its immediate departure was ordered.⁹ Paris had shown in a most convincing way that in time of emergency it could indeed rally to the cause.¹⁰

The situation in France outside of Paris was also the cause of much misgiving in governmental circles during the last days of July and the first days of August. Although but very brief press mention was made of the consternation which the assassination had caused among various portions of the industrial population, the undertones of crisis in the editorials calling for national unity gave evidence of the fact that circumstances were not too encouraging. This industrial unrest was particularly noticeable in Albi, Jaurès' home community, and in Carmaux, where he had been a great hero because of his work in organizing cooperatives. In both communities the miners and the glass workers stopped work.¹¹ In general, however, the gravity of the national situation served as a brake upon the possibility of further disturbance. The general attitude that prevailed during the first days after the tragedy was one of "*douloureuse indignation*"—manifest in the "silent reflection which alone admitted the seriousness of the situation." France as a whole seemed to feel that it was not the time for noisy agitation or for retaliation, since all the forces of the nation were necessary to face the German aggression. Thus even the heads of the Socialist Party insisted on the suppression of the "just anger" that under other conditions would have undoubtedly caused great disorder.¹²

⁸ *Echo de Paris*, August 1st.

⁹ Griener, H., "Die französische Mobilmachung 1914," *Berliner Monatshefte*, July, 1936, Vol. XIV, p. 533.

¹⁰ "Contrairement aux prévisions de M. Hennion (le préfet de police), il ne se produit pas le moindre trouble dans Paris. La ville est digne et silencieuse." Poincaré, *op. cit.*, p. 474.

¹¹ *Le Figaro*, August 2nd.

¹² *Le Journal*, August 2nd.

Immediate danger of disturbance had been averted, but the greater task of assuring itself of active Socialist cooperation now confronted the Viviani government. The problem had been great enough before the Jaurès incident when it was concerned only with winning over the pacifistic Socialists to a willing cooperation in a war that they agreed had become a necessity to maintain the national honor. The murder of Jaurès served not only to multiply the difficulties involved in securing this union but also at the same time to make it even more essential.

It was the task of the government, therefore, to handle the entire incident in such a manner that it could be used as the rallying point around which to call all France to unity. Only the seriousness of the crisis which was threatening saved the press and the government from being accused of hypocrisy in their treatment of the Jaurès tragedy. On no other grounds can the sudden change of policy of Jaurès' various political opponents, such as Poincaré and Viviani be excused. However, Conservatives and Radicals alike realized now that the situation was too grave to ignore any means by which a spirit of accord for the entire nation might be reached. The political murder of a troublesome adversary must be made the focal point for the realization of a new national unanimity.

With this goal in mind, therefore, the general trend of the articles that appeared on the first days after the tragedy was the emphasis on the great personal loss that the nation as a whole had suffered. Stress was laid on the fact that the career of Jaurès had been ended just when his eloquence could have done the most good as an instrument of national defense, for he had realized fully the significance of the appeal, "*Patrie en danger*," and had intended to cooperate fully with the government.

As would be expected the conservative *Le Temps* did not feel itself able to make quite such a radical change in policy since Jaurès had been "its adversary on all political questions." It did express the view, however, that the present situation was not the time to judge him because of the circumstance of his death and the fact that the existence of the nation was threatened with the possibility that his death might destroy the patriotic solidarity of France. Thus, though it praised Jaurès as being a "very great orator with a penetrating intelligence," it could not refrain from regretting that he had not used his talents "otherwise."¹³

Press emphasis was above all on the fact that the Jaurès tragedy must not be allowed to interfere with the national unity. Thus great stress was laid on such statements as that of Gustave Hervé, editor of *La Guerre Sociale* and fomenter of syndicalist demonstrations at one time in the past: "National defense must come first. They have assassinated Jaurès, but we shall not assassinate France."

The Conservative attitude toward the tragedy—an attitude which a great number might consider hypocritical—was well expressed in Poin-

¹³ *Le Temps*, August 2nd.

caré's letter to Mme. Jaurès, which was published as another means of appeal to the people of France. Poincaré declared that though Jaurès had often been his adversary, he had always had a great admiration for the other's talent and his character and deeply regretted this terrible crime which had removed him just when national accord was more necessary than ever.¹⁴

The success of the government's policy, as carried out through the press, was assured when, as early as August 2nd, it became obvious that the murder of Jaurès was not going to increase the difficulties standing in the way of national unity. In fact, as the next few days were going to show, the murder of Jaurès turned out to be one of the factors which helped to cement the unity of France.

¹⁴ *Le Figaro*, August 2nd.

Chapter III

MOBILIZATION

In the meantime political events of the utmost importance to the history of France were transpiring. France had given its official declaration of support for Russian interest in the Balkans on July 28th, and on July 29th Poincaré, Viviani, and Messimy agreed with the Russian Minister that war was "imminent" and decided that France should take part in it.¹ The French message to Russia on the next day therefore announced that France was "resolved to fulfill all the obligations of the alliance." On the same day at the meeting of the French Cabinet Messimy urged that "*couverture*," the stationing of troops in war formation along the frontier, should be ordered immediately. The Cabinet preferred, however, to advance the troops only to a line six miles behind the frontier—a well chosen move, since it did much to convince the outside world of France's pacific intentions while at the same time it did not impede her war preparations in the least.

On July 31st, upon verification of the news of general Russian mobilization, Germany sent ultimatums both to France and Russia—its plan of campaign requiring that the French army should be annihilated before the advance against the Russians. Germany in its ultimatum to France announced Russia's general mobilization and the German "threatening danger of war." It asked the French government to state within eighteen hours whether or not it intended to remain neutral in a Russo-German war. Furthermore, as a pledge of neutrality it was asked to turn over the fortresses of Verdun and Toul—to be occupied and returned "after the completion of the war." The latter demand no French government could have accepted.²

It was therefore as practically an inevitable culmination of the crises that the Council of Ministers of the French government decided on general mobilization, the proclamation being issued by the President of the Republic, Poincaré, on August 1st.³ By the orders of mobilization three and a half million men were supposed to be mobilized in two weeks' time and directed against the enemy. The government knew well, however, that the success of its policy in the days to come depended upon public acceptance of mobilization as an unfortunate necessity and of the war as a war of self defense. It was with this in mind, therefore, that Poincaré invoked the support of the people of France.

¹ Poincaré had returned from Russia at noon on July 29th, the first Ministerial Council in regard to the international situation being held immediately.

² Swain, J. W., *Beginning the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1933), pp. 363-365.

³ The French proclamation of mobilization was made fifteen minutes before the German one.

His proclamation was not the clarion-like call to war that the Kaiser's message to the German people was. On the whole it was a bit more subtle in its appeal, emphasizing the fact that the government desired peace above all else and was taking its present measures purely as a means of self defense against an enemy who had done much more in preparation for war. Moreover, despite the contents of the Franco-Russian alliance to the contrary, it expressly stated that a declaration of mobilization did not mean that war was inevitable.⁴ In part it read:

"For some days, despite the efforts of diplomacy, the state of Europe has been considerably disturbed. At the present time most nations are mobilizing, even those countries protected by neutrality having decided they ought to take this measure as a precaution. The powers whose constitutional legislation does not resemble ours, without having made a decree of mobilization, have started preparations equivalent to mobilization which anticipate its execution. France—who has always asserted her pacifistic wish, who has during these tragic days given to Europe counsel of moderation and a living example of wisdom, who had multiplied her efforts to maintain the peace of the world—even France has prepared herself for all eventualities and has taken the first steps indispensable to the safeguarding of her territory. But our legislation would not have permitted us to make these preparations complete if it had not interposed a decree of mobilization. Thoughtful of its responsibility, knowing that it is failing in its sacred duty if it leaves things in this state, the government had just made the decrees which present the situation. Mobilization is not war, but in the present circumstances, it appears as a better way of assuring peace honorably. In line with its ardent desire to join in a pacifistic solution of the crises, these necessary precautions concealed, the government will continue its diplomatic efforts and hope to be successful again. It counts on the self-control of the nation not to let go in any uncalled-for fashion, it counts on the patriotism of every Frenchman, knowing there is not one who is not ready to do his duty. At this hour, there are no more parties—just eternal France, pacifistic and determined. This land of right and justice is united in calm, vigilance, and dignity."⁵

The proclamation as a whole was a masterpiece of patriotic appeal, aimed to arouse national fervor for the defense of the nation—an appeal always much stronger than the promotion of some imperialistic aim. The echo of these peaceful sentiments was found in the press, which emphasized further the fact that German aggression had left mobilization the only course of action possible for a France whose peaceful intentions could not be doubted.⁶

Another expression of this same sentiment was presented by the press

⁴ Poincaré in his memoirs also professed a belief that mobilization did not presuppose the inevitability of war. "*Le Président du Conseil m'a déclaré que la mobilisation qu'on venait d'ordonner (premier jour dimanche) ne signifiait nullement des intentions agressives, ce que serait également confirmé dans la proclamation. Viviani prie Cambon de rappeler que le décret de mobilisation est une mesure essentielle de préservation nationale; que nous nous sommes alors trouvés dans l'obligation de prendre la même précaution que les autres puissances, mais que nous demeurons décidés à tout faire encore pour tâcher d'éviter la guerre.*" (Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 482.)

⁵ *Le Figaro*, August 2nd.

⁶ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 2nd.

in its report of the last interview between Viviani and the German Ambassador, von Schoen. Viviani had stated that the German attitude alone had dictated the French one, for though still pacifistic at heart, France had been obliged to take precautions analogous to the German ones. Moreover, as a final proof that France wanted peace, Viviani pointed out that the French Parliament had not been summoned as yet—a constitutional requirement if war were to be declared—and that the French troops were eight kilometers from the frontier, though German troops were at the moment violating French territory.⁷

In addition to this favorite theme of self-defense, there was the typical war cry that France was fighting not only for her soil but for civilization itself.

"We have seen with blinding clarity that it is barbarism which is reaching us with this formidable German horde, a barbarism which is preparing to recover and suffocate Europe, as did the first invasions of the East on the Roman world until they were crushed at the Catalanian fields. William II—he who formerly masqueraded as one in the service of civilization and peace—desires to be a modern Attila, sending his people forth against others, scorning the rights of nations, considering war as a business, and forcing his armies to live by carnage and pillage. The destiny of France now, as was in olden times that of our ancestors, is to stop the barbarian hordes—an honor of which we are going to show ourselves worthy."⁸

The problem of arousing French support for this governmental declaration of mobilization was simplified from the beginning by the aggressive military measures being taken in Germany. (In fact, the First German Army began its invasion of Luxemburg on August 2nd.) Thus the pertinence of the French cry of a war in self-defense was increased greatly.

The efficacy of this governmental program, as carried out through the press, was evidenced in the gratifying fact that there was no organized opposition to mobilization. Though the government which had promulgated the decrees of mobilization had but the most unsubstantial majority behind it, it early received encouragement from both the Conservatives and the Radicals.

The Conservative press, representing a group which stood always for a vigorous foreign policy, expressed complete approval of the government's declaration of mobilization: "measures indispensable for defending the honor, independence, and life of France." *Le Temps* declared with great patriotic fervor that "the simple and steadfast resolution of the French soldiers, who are marching to the front with a calmness, order, and regularity of good omen and outraged by the barbarities committed at the frontier, is equalled only by the steadfastness of every other French soldier, who hopes only that France will call him for duty."⁹

⁷ *Le Figaro*, August 2nd.

⁸ *Le Temps*, August 7th.

⁹ *Ibid.*

On the other hand, it was soon seen that the Socialist menace to the unity of France might come only from the actions of individual Socialists, rather than from any organized program of the party, for the leaders of the Socialist Party at once did all they could to cooperate with the government. As early as August 2nd, the President of the Council received a delegation from the revolutionary socialistic committee of Paris, which promised to do nothing that might disturb the action of the government during the critical hours it was soon to enter upon. In fact, and most important of all, they offered to draw up, with the head of the government, a proclamation declaring anyone a traitor who interfered with mobilization.¹⁰

Moreover, the organized Socialist Party early dispelled all fears with regard to the question of its intervention in case of actual hostilities. Thus a Socialist manifesto of the *Fédération de la Seine* stated that "to an aggression against republican and pacific France, to an aggression menacing civilization and humanity, we shall reply with all our might and with all our energies."¹¹

Despite the official proclamation of the party, however, there was still much Socialist sentiment against war, and it was this feeling which the government tried to overcome in every way possible. Thus it took no action against the various meetings organized in Paris and Lyons by the Socialists against war in general, hoping that a conciliatory policy would bring better results. In the meanwhile the press continued its campaign to arouse Socialist support of the war by dwelling on the connection between "*la patrie, la République, et la révolution*."¹²

In general, the feeling of the French people seemed to be one almost of relief at their deliverance from a period of menace and uncertainties. Whatever unrest existed turned against the new enemy, for the government had to admonish the Parisian population to maintain their self control and to refrain from breaking in establishments with German names.

On the whole, however, much to the surprise of all, mobilization went off without any untoward incident. The system which had been previously evolved for the organization of the army, distribution of equipment, and coordination of the railroads proved to be most effective. Soon every available force in France was turned to military use. The German declaration of war against France on August 3rd had justified the attitude of

¹⁰ Also on August 2nd a note was published from the Central Council of the Workingman's Party proclaiming sympathy with the Socialists. "... whatever the differences of doctrine and of tactics which separate us from the unified Socialist party and which have caused the constitution of the workingman's party, we associate ourselves with the sorrow which has struck world-wide Socialism and bow respectfully before this tomb prematurely opened." *Le Figaro*, August 2nd.

¹¹ *Le Figaro*, August 2nd.

¹² *Le Temps*, August 14th.

defense the French government had taken, for to the layman the declaration of war was the decisive element in determining aggression.

Consequently the government had to use none of the preventive measures which it had prepared in case of open disobedience to mobilization. The famous Carnet B, including 4,000 names of possible pacifistic leaders of the proletariat, who were to be arrested at the outbreak of the war, never left the files of the Ministry of the Interior.¹³

Despite the various manifestations of cooperation that the Viviani government had received, it still did not possess a solid political backing. The elected representatives of the nations had not yet given officially their full support to the policy of the government. Moreover, the constitution prescribed that exceptional legislation necessitated by the war needed the approval of the legislature. For these purposes a meeting of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies was called for August 4th, 1914.

¹³ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 508.

Suarez, Georges, *La Vie Orgueilleuse de Clemenceau* (Paris, 1930), pp. 446-450.

Chapter IV

WAR LEGISLATION

The final opportunity for the government to draw the nation together through the Jaurès tragedy came on August 4th, when his funeral was held. It was of the utmost importance that everything should proceed without disturbance; mobilization had already been ordered, Parliament was to meet the same day to vote the war credits, within a few hours the Socialists would be called upon to express their decision as to whether their party or their country was to come first. Viviani's funeral address was in reality, therefore, a most eloquent appeal for national unity, an appeal which endeavored first of all to convey the idea that Jaurès would have favored cooperation with the government.

"And if it is true to say that his ardent words often stirred up wrath—not only around him but sometimes against him, his tragic death, coming at a time when he had just become reconciled with all his adversaries, forces them to express the public affliction which their cause suffers from this irreparable loss."

Viviani disclosed the fact that Jaurès had discussed the foreign situation with him on the day preceding his assassination and had congratulated him upon the attitude of the government. Furthermore, Jaurès was supposed to have told the Prime Minister that while he stood always for peace, it must be a peace of justice and honor. Viviani concluded, therefore, with a call to all France to "union, to a national understanding, and to the supreme concord that Jaurès would have wanted."¹

Viviani's speech was followed by statements from leading members of most of the important groups of the Left, all the orators, after having given homage to Jaurès, assuring the government of their support and of that of their followers.² This same sentiment was even affirmed by Belgian Deputy Huysman, who represented the International Socialist Bureau. He was much applauded for saying that "the thought of Jaurès went beyond his party; he was the defender of small nations, of poor people who were oppressed, invaded."³

The most important indication, however, of the attitude of the French proletariat during this crisis was found in the speech of Jouhaux, the dele-

¹ *Le Figaro*, August 5th.

² Bracke spoke in the name of the editors of *l'Humanité*, then Buisson for the League of Rights of Man, d'Estournelles for the Parliamentary Group of Arbitration, Poisson for the National Federation of Cooperatives, Sembat for the Socialist group of the Chamber, Vaillant for the Socialist Party, and Dubreuilh for the Permanent Administrative Commission of the Socialist Party. *Le Temps*, August 6th.

³ *Le Figaro*, August 5th.

gate of the Workingman's Association and the general secretary of the C.G.T. This latter organization, which had constantly advocated the general strike in case of war, now renounced its entire philosophy. At this occasion, Jouhaux, after explaining why the working man had liked and admired Jaurès, and how much the syndicalists, despite a certain variance of tactics, had been under the direction of his thought and action, continued in the following words:

"Jaurès even now tells us our duty—to go on the fields of battle with the ardent wish of repelling the aggressor, carrying in our hearts not the hatred of men but of imperialism which wishes to oppress us. . . . We will not forget, even in these difficult hours, faith in the international of which Jaurès was the apostle, and we shall defend our liberties in order to be able to give them to others. . . . In the name of the syndicalist organization, of all the workers who have already rejoined their regiments, and of those of whom I'm one, who are leaving tomorrow, I declare that we're going onto the field of battle to repulse the aggressor, the hatred of imperialism carrying us along."⁴

Whether the Socialist actions in the Legislature of August 4th would have been the same if there had been no Jaurès crisis is a matter of conjecture. The fact is certain, however, that the government's hope that it would be able to make the whole affair a means of unifying rather than dividing the country, was well founded.⁵

The feeling of national unity which had held sway at the funeral, where every one was being drawn together by a common expression of sympathy, was carried over to the meeting of the French legislature, where it was further amplified by the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Deschanel, in his opening address to the Chambers. He seized the occasion as an admirable opportunity to play on the emotions of the Deputies, by rousing them with a call to unity in the support of a government, no longer of parties, but of national defense. It was inevitable that in a Parliament called to hear the proclamation of common peril any thought of resistance should have seemed out of place. Deschanel emphasized again the fact that Jaurès had been making a supreme effort for peace and national union, ready to do all that he could for the safety of civilization and liberty of France.

"Those who have examined his ideas and who knew his strength realize what in our controversies, we owe to him. His adversaries are as affected as his friends and bow with sadness before our tribune in mourning. But what do I say? Has he any adversaries? No! There are no longer any but Frenchmen—Frenchmen who in the last forty four years have made for the cause of peace all sacrifices, and who today are ready for all sacrifices for this most sainted of causes—the safety of civilization, liberty of France and of Europe. From the grave of this man who has perished a martyr of his idea comes a

⁴ *Le Journal*, August 5th.

⁵ Poincaré's memoirs reveal his satisfaction with the course of events at the Jaurès funeral. "*Les obsèques de Jean Jaurès . . . ont pris elles-mêmes le caractère auguste d'une manifestation de solidarité nationale.*" Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 541.

hope of union—from his lips a cry of hope. Maintain this union, realize this hope, for the state, for justice, for human conscience. Is not this the most fitting homage we are able to give him?"⁶

Thus the Jaurès episode, which might in less skilful hands have been a cause for disunion and unrest in this time of national crisis was turned to account by the government as the rallying point round which almost a religious fervor of ardent patriotism and unanimity could be brought. All felt that any opposition to the government would seem definitely out of place, and there was no disturbance in the Chambers, even when Germany or the Kaiser was mentioned.⁷ Thus the unity created by the tragic death of Jaurès was partially responsible for the success of the government at this historic meeting. Maurice Barrès said, "There was not a false note during those unforgettable hours," and that, in brief, was the opinion of all—just as the government had wished.⁸

It was in a setting thus nobly arranged by circumstances and by the politicians who had spoken that Viviani presented the government declarations on the existing war situation. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the Socialists, who had formerly declared themselves for peace at any price, joined with the other Deputies in the thunderous applause with which it was received. The spirit of the day had proved itself too strong for any possible opposition that might have arisen. The Socialists had reconciled themselves to the course of events and were proving that their first loyalty was to their country rather than to their party.

The task of the French government on August 4th was complicated by the fact that the French constitution had overlooked the well-established doctrine that in time of any great national crisis which exacts strict discipline and prompt obedience—such as war—the government's authority is always greatly increased.⁹ Thus France had no legislation to provide for those governmental changes which war would make inevitable. The law did provide, however, for the state of siege to be maintained for the duration of war in all the departments of France and in the three Algerian departments; it was this which the government of France had declared by decree on August 2nd, the first day of general mobilization. The declaration had had the effect of partially suspending the guarantees for the usual civil liberties which Frenchmen enjoyed in time of peace.¹⁰ This interfer-

⁶ *Le Journal*, August 5th.

⁷ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 5th.

⁸ "Belle et bonne journée, écrit M. Maurice Barrès, de tous points parfaite, sommet de la perfection parlementaire." Quoted by Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 547, from Maurice Barrès, *l'Union Sacrée*, p. 19.

⁹ Renouvin, Pierre, *The Forms of War Government in France* (New Haven, 1927), p. 11.

¹⁰ "The state of siege is justified by the necessity of concentrating all powers in the hands of the military authority in the frontier zone as well as everywhere, and by the need of maintaining order during mobilization, especially in Algeria. The state of siege confers

ence with the every day activities of people as far as their social and economic life was concerned was really of tremendous import, and it had spoken well for the spirit of nationalism and of national solidarity that it had happened without incident, but now it had to be approved by the representatives of the nation.

Since 1870 four separate attempts had been made to draw up the specific form of government that should function in time of war, but none of these plans had been accepted, though French statesmen were agreed that in time of war, general modifications of the normal order of procedure would have to be made. The general consensus of opinion seemed to have been that when confronted with the actual crisis the problem would work itself out much more quickly and much more smoothly if parliament had never raised prejudice and opposition by previous debate on the subject.¹¹

However, even before mobilization *Le Temps* had published an editorial, "In Case of War," which, considering the semi-official attitude of that paper, may be taken to represent the first step of the government in preparing the country for the requests it was going to make for the complete change from peace to war. It declared that war would be the last resource of the government, but that in case of war, the government would have six specific tasks to perform: first, to designate the adversary against which most of the forces were to be sent; second, to put all resources at the disposition of the generals; third, to complete mobilization; fourth, to give liberty of action to the commander-in-chief to attain the end indicated; fifth, to coordinate operations by uniting all under one commander who would know all that was going on; and sixth, to form an "Executive Committee of National Defense" under the President of the Republic with the cooperation of all the Ministers.¹² Thus an actual military dictatorship was called for by the Conservative Republicans, a dictatorship which should have not just military, but also political and economic control, for only in the last of the six points was there any mention of the part that the other Ministers of the government would play. The question that neces-

on the military authority all the powers with which the civil authority is clothed for the maintenance of the police and of public order. The civil authorities continue to exercise their powers only in measures where they have not been dispossessed by the military authority. The military authority has the right in a state of siege of searching the homes of citizens, of removing old offenders, of recovering and confiscating arms and munitions, or prohibiting those publications or meetings which are judged dangerous for order. Military tribunals may lay before the courts crimes against the safety of the state, constitution, order, and public peace, whatever may be the rank of the offenders." *Le Figaro*, August 3rd. "And before a court-martial the guarantees that the accused ordinarily enjoys are restricted, the penalties more severe, the procedure more rapid. Moreover, the Government has recourse to the military for the exercise of all police powers, special as well as normal." Renouvin, Pierre, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹¹ Renouvin, Pierre, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-23.

¹² *Le Temps*, August 1st.

sarily arose with the meeting of the French Parliament concerned, therefore, the degree to which the government would attempt to extend its powers over the civil population.

Before attacking this problem, however, the government had first to organize all the forces of the nation behind it by justifying the actions which had already been taken and by impressing upon all the necessity of union. It was with this in mind that in his opening address to the French Chamber of Deputies Viviani read the presidential declaration which rehearsed these same arguments published since August 1st, telling how France had made every effort to maintain the peace of Europe, even subordinating her own interests to the interest of international peace.¹³ Poincaré's message ended with an appeal to all France for unity—for *union sacrée*, and it was those two words which became the theme of this August 4th session of the French Parliament. Behind this hope of a *union sacrée* was the whole idea of the unanimity of opinion and cessation of all political controversy that were absolutely necessary for France if she were to present a united front to the enemy.¹⁴

¹³ "France is the object of a brutal and premeditated aggression which is an insolent defiance to the rights of the people. Before the declaration of war we have been attacked—even before the Ambassador of Germany asked for his passports, our territory was violated. The empire of Germany last night gave the true name to a state of war that it had already created. For more than forty years French people, in a sincere love of peace, have driven back in the remotest part of their heart the desire of legitimate atonement. They have given to the world the example of a great nation which, definitely restored from its defeat by will, patience, and work, has used its renewed and restored force only in the interest of progress and for the good of humanity. Since the Austrian ultimatum opened a menacing crisis for all of Europe, France has striven to follow and to advise everywhere a policy of prudence, wisdom, and moderation. One can ascribe to France no act, gesture, or word which has not been pacifistic and conciliatory. But now in the hour of combat, it has the right of surrendering the last of its supreme efforts to avert the war which has just broken out and for which the German Empire will bear, before history, the crushing responsibility. Ever since Germany has, in fact, declared war subtly on Russia, our allies, with us, expressed publicly the hope of continuing peaceful negotiations, but Germany tried to deceive us traitorously. France was awake. As attentive as pacifistic, it was prepared, and our enemies are going to meet in their path our brave troops who are at their battle posts while the mobilization of all our national forces is being methodically carried on . . . France will know now, as always, to conciliate the most generous spirits and most enthusiastic ardor with this self-control which is the sign of lasting energy and the best guarantee of victory . . . France will be heroically defended by all her sons, for whom nothing will destroy before the enemy the *union sacrée* and who are today fraternally assembled in the same indignation against the aggressor and in the same patriotic trust. France is loyally seconded by Russia, her ally; she is sustained by the loyal friendship of England. And already from all parts of the civilized world have come expressions of sympathy. For France represents today before the universe the forces of liberty, justice, and reason." *L'Echo de Paris*, August 5th.

¹⁴ Poincaré in his memoirs divulges what the essence of the "*union sacrée*" meant to him: "*Étroitement unis, la France saura concilier les plus généreux élan et les ardeurs les plus enthousiastes avec cette maîtrise de soi, qui est le signe des énergies durables et la meilleure garantie de la victoire. . . .*" Samné, George, *Raymond Poincaré* (Paris, 1933), p. 143.

The first step in building up this *union sacrée* had been the successful conclusion of the Jaurès affair, a crisis which had become the foundation for the unification of French parties. Moreover, the political events of the first days of August had served well to crystallize the militaristic spirit of the Deputies and unite them against the common enemy by showing the approaching danger that was threatening all France through no fault of her own. Thus it was that the applause at the conclusion of Viviani's exposé of the military situation gave evidence that he had indeed the support of every member of the Chamber.¹⁵

Noulens, Minister of Finance, then read the titles of the projected emergency laws that were needed to give the government its necessary power. Metin rose in the name of the Commission of the Budget to give the customary assurance that he was in accord with the government, but the Deputies were so eager to show their confidence in the government and were so carried away with the patriotic fervor of the moment that they would not even let him speak, voting impatiently with raised hands.¹⁶

The first projected law which was presented authorized the government to take by decree the measures necessary to regulate the execution of contracts as long as the war lasted, "to facilitate the performance or suspend the effect of commercial or civil obligations" and consequently to institute a moratorium. It thus obtained from the Parliament a delegation of the legislative power regarding the economic life of France. Undoubtedly it could easily have obtained far wider powers, the Deputies being so swept off their feet with a great wave of patriotism, but it made no attempt to do so.¹⁷

Another law of August 4th authorized the government, in the absence of the Chambers, to open "supplementary or extraordinary credits" by decrees decided on in the Council of Ministers and adopted in the Council of State.¹⁸ Since it was impossible for the government to conform in war time to the strict rules normally imposed upon it, Parliament could not be asked to authorize all expenditures in advance, because unforeseen requirements had to be met without delay. Similarly the rule that budgetary credits must be applied each to its specific purpose could not be rigidly enforced. Even at that the powers granted to the executive by this law were far wider than the immediate requirements demanded.¹⁹ Of small importance, but showing great partiality, was the law which provided that a civil servant entering military service would get the salary he had

¹⁵ *Le Temps*, August 6th.

¹⁶ *Le Figaro*, August 5th.

¹⁷ Renouvin, Pierre, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

¹⁸ *Le Temps*, August 4th.

¹⁹ By a decree of September 11th, however, the government even exceeded the powers accorded to it when it remodeled the chapters of the normal budget for 1914 and modified the classification as it thought fit. Renouvin, Pierre, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

been getting in cases where the military salary was inferior, but would get the military salary in cases where his civil salary had been inferior.²⁰

The final urgent measure, whose vote the government secured on August 4th, was a law "to prevent press indiscretions in war time." This emergency measure was to cease to be operative, at the latest, on the conclusion of peace, though the government might suspend it earlier by a simple decree. The law prohibited, under penalty of fine and prison, the publication of any information regarding military operations that had not been approved by the government and the military authorities, or of any appreciation of military or diplomatic events calculated to assist the enemy or to exercise an unfavorable influence on the spirit of the army or the country. In virtue of the state of siege offenses were to be tried by court-martial.²¹

In this legislation the question of requiring newspapers and other kinds of public matter to be previously authorized did not arise. The law provided for a repressive not a preventive regime. In theory, therefore, the press was obliged either to refrain from any commentary on events and confine itself to reproducing the communiqués, or to risk the penalties of the law if its commentaries should appear to endanger the morale of its readers. But in practice, from the very first days of the war, without any legal enactment, it was a system of preventive censorship that was set up. On the evening of August 4th, when the laws relating to the state of siege and to press indiscretions had been voted but not yet promulgated,

²⁰ *Le Temps*, August 4th.

²¹ 1. "The Press was prohibited from publishing any information, unless it was given by the government or the command, on the following points:

1. Operations of mobilization and the transport of troops and material.
2. Composition of effective forces, units and detachments, order of battle.
3. Number of men remaining or returning to their homes.
4. Number of wounded, killed, or prisoners.
5. Works of defense.
6. Situation of armament, materials, supplies.
7. Health situation.
8. Appointments and changes in high command.
9. Arrangement, emplacement, and movement of armies; disengagement of fleet.
10. And in general all information concerning military operations or diplomacy of a nature to aid the enemy and exercise a bad influence on the spirit of the army and the population.

2. All infractions are to be punished by imprisonment from one to five years and by a fine of 1,000 to 5,000 francs.

3. The introduction into France, circulation, sale, or distribution of papers, pamphlets, writings, or drawings of any nature published by another country can be forbidden by a simple decree of the minister of interior. All infractions will be punished by imprisonment from three months to a year and by a fine of 100-1000 francs.

4. The law will be in force until a date fixed by decree of the President of the Republic or until conclusion of peace.²² (*Le Temps*, August 6th.)

the government issued a communication to the newspapers regarding the future system of censorship. After recalling that it had the power of prohibiting any publication and of punishing its author, it expressed the hope that it would not be obliged to resort to drastic methods.

"The government counts on the patriotic good will of the press of all shades of opinion, in Paris and in the provinces, not to publish a single item of information regarding the war, whatever its source, its origin, or its nature, without its being previously vied by the Press Bureau, which has been established since yesterday at the Ministry of War."

In reality, however, the government's communication was not a purely arbitrary act, but might almost be said to have been based on a friendly agreement with the newspaper editors. The press found it of great advantage, for it was better to ask for previous authority than to run the risk of a penalty. Thus when the Minister of War had asked the newspapers to accept "with good grace" the position in which they were to be placed, he had had no great difficulty in persuading them.²²

Moreover, the Chamber also confirmed the decree of August 2nd, placing France in a state of siege, and it was decided that the state of siege should last throughout the war. The President of the Republic was empowered to suspend and reimpose it. This law was voted without discussion, like all the emergency measures proposed at that moment by the government, but it appears that in the private meetings of the political groups the measure had met with some opposition, being somewhat questionable from a legal point of view.²³ The particular military regime which these emergency laws set up was a result of the belief held by all that the war would be a short one; admittedly the government would have approached the matter in an entirely different way if it had realized the length of the struggle that stretched before it.

Thus the meeting of the French Parliament on August 4th, 1914, and the emergency laws which were passed, justified the policy of the government of deferring action on the question of war administration until the occasion arose. In the stress of the war situation the government was able to suspend in part not only the guarantees that all individuals enjoy and the fundamental rights of the citizen, but even the exercise by the nation of its sovereignty. The people seemed to feel neither inconvenience nor resentment. As the government had foreseen, in time of war the public liked to feel itself firmly governed in order to meet the common danger.²⁴ Without any objections, therefore, the government was able to develop the rights of the executive, enlarge greatly the peace functions of the govern-

²² Renouvin, Pierre, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-44.

²³ Renouvin states that the opposition arose from the fact that it "gave an indefinite extension in space and time to the state of siege, whereas, according to the intention of the legislator, it was to be strictly limited in both. The government was thus showing a disposition to interpret in the widest sense the prerogatives accorded to it." (Renouvin, Pierre, *op. cit.*, p. 28.)

²⁴ Dimnet, Abbé, *France Herself Again*, p. 385.

ment, maintain order, and control public opinion. No longer did it need to feel bound to keep its decisions in strict harmony with the law to which they were subject. France had shown through the meeting of the French Parliament that she preferred to lay her fate in the hands of the executive, trusting it to take the measures necessary for the common welfare.

After the presentation of the projected laws, the Chamber broke up into a "magnificent spectacle of accord." Everyone shouted "*Vive la France*"; the younger Deputies in military uniform who were going to the frontier were the heroes of the occasion. It was increasingly evident that all the credits and other measures demanded by the government would be voted unanimously, a truly remarkable demonstration to those who had followed for any length of time the political struggles of the parties.

The meeting of the Senate was much the same as that of the Deputies. Dubost gave the usual call to union, declaring that the army, faithful to its duty and to its allies, was going to fight for the most sacred of all causes—violated neutrality, invaded frontiers, and the independence of France; and that the time had come for the Senate to show its patriotism by acts, not words. The Senators answered his appeal immediately by passing unanimously all the laws of the Chamber.²⁵

Because of the fact that the presence of over 250 of the Deputies in the reserve force of the army was going to reduce the membership of the Chamber to little more than half, it seemed wisest to leave, temporarily at least, all authority in the hands of the executive and military power. To avoid complications in the summoning of Parliament when it should become absolutely necessary, it was decided not to close the session by decree, but to adjourn it in order that the possibility of a rapid assembly of Parliament would be left open.²⁶

The unanimous opinion at the close of the August 4th session of Parliament was that a more remarkable example of national accord had seldom been seen. According to Poincaré, the Ministerial verdict in regard to the events of the day was: "*De mémoire d'homme, il n'y a pas eu en France quelque chose de plus beau.*"²⁷ Clemenceau himself had only approval to bestow upon the events of the day, even complimenting his arch-enemy, Poincaré, upon the presidential proclamation.²⁸ The need of the government for a party truce had indeed been gratified. For the time being, at least, France could turn the full strength of her forces against the enemy, fearing no longer a "stab in the back" from party opposition to the war measures being taken. Only the future was to show the permanence of this *union sacrée*.

²⁵ *Le Temps*, August 6th.

²⁶ *Le Temps*, August 26th.

²⁷ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 548.

²⁸ "*Je sors du Sénat où il nous a été donné lecture d'un très beau manifeste du Président de la République, qui a résumé en termes concis et forts tout ce qu'il fallait dire.*" Suarez, Georges, *La Vie Orgueilleuse de Clemenceau* (Paris, 1930), p. 439.

Chapter V

UNION SACRÉE DURING AUGUST, 1914

The meeting of the French legislature on August 4th had presented undisputable evidence for the average Frenchman of the creation of a national party truce, a *union sacrée*.¹ It seemed that French politicians, one and all, had united in a common decision to subordinate all partisan interests to the unity of action necessary for the welfare of the state.² This view of the *union sacrée* was evidenced in the editorial declaration, "Political differences are now united in love for the state," and in the comments of various politicians. Malvy, the Minister of the Interior, declared: "I am not a Radical-Socialist now but a Frenchman"; Hervé, the noted anti-militarist, stated: "Strike out from the Internationale the verse on generals; otherwise sing the Marseillaise as have our forefathers for one hundred and twenty years";³ and Clemenceau in his turn called to France "... à oublier leurs haines et à connaître enfin la joie de s'aimer."⁴

In the first enthusiasm of the newly-established *union sacrée*, the popular imagination was seized by the possibilities that opened for a country completely united, and the press as a whole proclaimed high hopes with optimistic fervor.

"The last few days have been unique in the history of France because of the intensity of the enthusiasm that has completely burned out all the internal divisions and hates of

¹ In the rhetorical style of Poincaré the "*union sacrée*" was pictured in the following words: "... l'union sacrée, sacrée comme le bataillon thébain, dont les guerriers, liés d'une indissoluble amitié, juraient de mourir ensemble, sacrée, comme les guerres entreprises par les Grecs pour la défense du temple de Delphes, sacrée comme ce qui est grand, inviolable, et presque surnaturel." Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 541.

² In speaking of French *union sacrée* *Le Figaro* compared France to the famous French fable of *Le Loup, la Mère et l'Enfant*:

"Il entend un enfant crier:

"La mère aussitôt le gourmande

"Le menace, s'il ne se tait,

"De le donner au loup."

But when the wolf hurried up, wishing to profit by the dispute, everyone in the house worked together and killed the beast.

"Biaux chères leups, n'écoutez mie

"Mère tenchent chen feux qui crie."

But just as in the fable, when danger approached the disunited France has come together, as one, to repel the common foe." *Le Figaro*, August 16th.

³ *Le Temps*, August 1st.

⁴ Clemenceau further states: "De nous aimer parce que ce qu'il y a de plus grand en nous, le devoir de témoigner devant les hommes que nous n'avons pas dégénéré de nos pères, et que nos enfants n'auront pas à baisser les yeux quand on leur parlera de nous . . . Ni recriminations, ni phrases grandiloquentes, ni promesses de mourir. Assez de paroles, des actes, des actes réfléchis, de prudence ordonnée et d'action sans retour." Suarez, Georges, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

the past. . . . Nothing has been seen so beautiful, so great, so unique in our history. To see everyone standing, trembling with enthusiasm, carried away by a superb spirit of devotion to France, of confidence in its actions, and of passion for its greatness and its independence—forgetting all the discords of past days and reconciled in a unanimous love for France—this was a spectacle without parallel.”⁵

Despite the enthusiasm with which the French *union sacrée* was inaugurated and with which the various forces pledged their cooperation during August, to the careful observer it soon became evident that the fate of the French *union sacrée* was to be no different from that of the German “*Burgfrieden*” or other similar party truces. Soon after the August 4th session of Parliament, when the *union sacrée* of French parties had been declared with such enthusiasm, causes for dissension began to appear; it became but too clear that the cooperation of some of the forces had never been more than nominal. During the month of August, then, despite the various signs indicating the growth of the unanimity of France, the first steps toward the eventual break-up of this *union sacrée* could also be distinguished.

On August 3rd several changes had been made in the government—changes of which the Conservative press was soon to express its disapproval as they made the new Ministry definitely more Radical-Socialist than it had been. Gouthier, former Minister of the Navy, who had resigned on account of his health, was replaced by the Republican Socialist, Augagneur, formerly Minister of Public Instruction. Augagneur’s place in turn was taken by Sarraut, a member of the Radical-Socialist Party. Viviani, who wished to concentrate all the governmental activity in his hands, kept the Presidency of the Council Without Portfolio, asking Doumergue to replace him in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Viviani’s innovation of a Ministry Without Portfolio had seemed the only desirable course of action to take. Even in time of peace it had been obviously a tremendous burden for the President of the Council to have the great responsibility of a ministerial department besides his duties of direction and control and his role of spokesman for the government in the Chambers.⁶

Clemenceau had refused Viviani’s proposal to enter the Cabinet without greater personal power, “for I should occupy myself in disagreeing with my colleagues.” A committee of Barthou, Pinchon, and Charles Dumont, all members of the Right, had gone to see Clemenceau about his entrance into the Cabinet, but he refused their request. His typical reply was that his entrance into the Cabinet would only mean that he would be obliged to work for the re-entry of his visitors also—a step to which he was opposed, since he knew it would please the President of the Republic.⁷ Despite

⁵ *Le Figaro*, August 3rd, *L’Echo de Paris*, August 5th.

⁶ *Le Temps*, August 5th.

⁷ At this time Clemenceau became very disturbed over what he termed the incompetence of the government. He complained to Ribot of the fact that Viviani had not received the Serbian minister, Vesnitch, who had come to ask for a much needed loan for

Clemenceau's undiminished opposition to Poincaré and Viviani, he continued to maintain for the public his role as an upholder of the *union sacrée*. On August 6th he printed in his paper enthusiastic approbation of Poincaré's presidential message.⁸ Whether real or assumed, this attitude of co-operation was very important, as he had during the last thirty years made himself feared for the bitterness of his opposition. It had caused the downfall of many a Cabinet and had often been called the chief obstacle to union in France.⁹

The Conservative opposition to the new Cabinet was not personal; that is, there was no particular objection to the choice of Doumergue and Sarraut, both representatives of the Radical-Socialist Party, or even to that of Augagneur, a Republican Socialist. Though the latter had been no friend of the Conservatives in the past, especially on questions of internal politics, the Conservative press even went so far as to cede to him credit for showing proof of administrative qualities. The Rightists felt, however, that Viviani had betrayed his trust and had failed to form a true *union sacrée* Ministry by omitting such national figures as the Conservatives Ribot and Barthou: "They are Republicans, whose name means something in Europe and who have forgotten their internal dissensions during the national peril." It was charged that Viviani had founded a Cabinet which merely reflected the party affiliations of the majority in the legislature, for no true "*union sacrée*" Ministry could possibly exist without Ribot and Barthou, the two men who had laid the foundation for the present diplomatic structure of France by building up the alliance system and passing the three year military law. Party truce notwithstanding, the Conservatives severely censored Viviani as showing great weakness in accepting the Socialist veto (expressed in *l'Humanité*) against certain Deputies as Ministers. They charged that he had thus ignored the certain support of Conservative opinion in order to sanction the grudges of a few revolutionaries, and that the Socialists, rather than being appeased, would only demand more the next time.¹⁰ Poincaré also was disappointed in the new Cabinet, for he had wanted a corresponding enlargement to the right by including perhaps Briand and Delcassé.¹¹

These undercurrents of the usual French political strife were not seen by the average Frenchman, for the press in general dwelt only upon the increasing evidences that a true national unanimity was being created.

Serbia, but had told him to return in two days; since he could not wait that long, Vesnitch had had to return home without the loan. Clemenceau threatened to protest violently to the Tribune in regard to the whole matter, but by that time the money had already been sent. Ribot, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

⁸ Suarez, Georges, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

⁹ *Le Temps*, August 6th.

¹⁰ *Le Temps*, August 5th.

¹¹ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 510.

Support of the *union sacrée* was early given by the extreme Right through communications from the monarchist pretender, the Duke of Orléans¹² and the Bonapartist candidate Louis Napoleon,¹³ each of whom volunteered his services to fight for France. Because of the law of exile, passed in 1886, Viviani had to refuse their requests—a refusal which was accompanied by no regret, for he certainly had no desire to give either of them an opportunity to show his military prowess and thus establish a prestige dangerous to the Republic. From the beginning, however, the anti-Republicans used every opportunity to urge their adherents to support the national defense. Throughout the course of the war, the French Royalists and Bonapartists claimed to be the most vigorous defenders of *la patrie*.

From the beginning the Socialist Party had given undivided cooperation to the French government, aiding in every way it could. Its work had been particularly praiseworthy in constituting national committees of relief and work to aid families in need and discover employment for those workers not mobilized. All the various federations and syndicates now gave the full extent of their support to the administration not only by furnishing assistance to the wives and children of their former employees, but also by urging their members, especially those employed at ports and docks, to accept longer working hours.¹⁴

In the first rush of almost unanimous public support for the government, the Right naturally wanted to do its part and show that its feelings for France were fully as strong as those of any other party. After the first shock of crisis had passed, however, several incidents took place in which the more usual Rightist attitude toward the Radical-Socialists in power was evidenced. On August 8th there appeared an article, signed with the

¹² The Duke of Orléans had already made a great show of patriotism in 1890 by entering France despite the decree of banishment against him, and preparing himself for the military service to which every French youth is subject. As a result, he was tried by the government and imprisoned for four months. Barriere, M., *Les princes d'Orléans* (Paris, 1933). The Duke of Orléans sent the following note from Brussels to the French Minister of War: "During the present events, all laws of exception, all political dissent ought to fall; every Frenchman should have the right of regaining his place under the flag. I have come to ask of you this right and honor for the duration of hostilities, sure that you will comprehend what sentiment I am obeying. I await your response confidently." Viviani refused this request but suggested that he apply for admittance in the armies of the other allies. He made similar requests to England and Russia, but both were refused. He therefore remained in Brussels in the ambulance service. *Le Figaro*, August 12th.

¹³ Louis Napoleon wrote: "Thirty years ago, after having fulfilled my military duty to France, I was denied my citizen rights and was crossed from the rolls of the army by the law of exemption. Today the order of mobilization calls all France to arms. I should like to obtain permission to take my part in the defense of my country. I should be glad to fulfill, no matter what it is, whatever task I am appointed to." In a letter to a friend, Louis, who had been serving in the Russian imperial army, divulged the fact that if he were denied the right to serve in France, he would return to Russia. *Le Figaro*, August 13th.

¹⁴ *Le Temps*, August 9th.

initials of the Socialist, Pierre Renadel, reminding the Conservatives, as represented by *Le Temps*, not to revive ancient polemics by taunting the Socialists about their vote against the three year law. This insinuation that it was not doing its share toward maintaining national unity naturally aroused the ire of the editors of *Le Temps*. Its editorial reply showed clearly that even *union sacrée* could not submerge for very long the true current of French political strife.

"We reaffirm our desire to give complete support to the government of France during its time of common ordeal, but ask the Socialists not to exaggerate their own merit in speaking this new language of reconciliation and national effort. The signal for their cooperation with the government certainly did not come from the leaders of the party, who followed rather than directed the overwhelming patriotic movement of the masses for the defense of the country. The Socialists are the only party which have not maintained this truce, the only party that has had the pretensions to overlook the outstanding services the government is performing to demand an accounting from certain governmental officials who have deviated from their plans as originally expressed."

Whether or not the accusation was true cannot be judged here; the point of the controversy was that it made it increasingly evident that even a *union sacrée* could not bury for long deep-rooted party jealousies.¹⁵

One of the most timely of the moves which the government made in order to conciliate the forces of the Right was the change in its usual anti-clerical policy. The government felt that a more conciliatory policy would give positive proof of the absence of any narrow party feeling. It realized that in any time of national crisis, but especially in one in which the life of the nation was itself at stake, religious approval and blessing was a tremendous force of union in a country where at least half of the population was guided in its attitude by the Church. Thus as early as possible the administration made a bid for Conservative cooperation by calling numerous priests and bishops to take part in the ceremonies incident upon the departure of troops for the frontier and to give the sanction of the Catholic Church to the war. Typical of the way in which the Church reconciled its Christian principles to a demand for war is the following appeal of the Archbishop of Paris:

"God is great and his purposes are magnificent; it is indeed a holy war that we have heard preached in the church of the Madeleine, a holy war of civilization against barbarism and against the most savage aggression, a war of holy justice and good reason against the most atrocious blows of force."¹⁶

The government also acceded to the demand by increasing by two the number of chaplains for each division and by placing 250 more chaplains in the naval forces.¹⁷ By this action it hoped to draw the whole-hearted support not only of the Church itself, but also of the French Catholic

¹⁵ *Le Temps*, August 10th.

¹⁶ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 4th.

¹⁷ *Le Temps*, August 15th.

peasantry in general and to strengthen the morale of both the soldiers and their families at home. A representative Conservative expression of approbation stated:

"The Viviani government has offered to all a proof of liberalism and conciliation for which it should be very sincerely congratulated—of admirable energy and penetrating clairvoyance, of great tolerance and firm honesty of heart and character."¹⁸

Even the foreigners residing in France were not immune to the general enthusiasm which pervaded France. No doubt existed among these residents regarding the justice of the French cause. By August 4th, declarations of cooperation and support came from all sides.¹⁹ Various corps of volunteers, Slavs, Swiss, Jews, Belgians, and Dutch, all residing in Paris, offered their services to the government.²⁰

The only serious nationality question with which the French government had to cope was represented by the native Moslems in Algeria. Although many of them had volunteered their services on the first days after mobilization, France could not be sure of the actions of the population as a whole. Consequently, in order to create some kind of war enthusiasm among these natives, the following statement was released—a statement very carefully worded to arouse the desired unanimous support:

"By her declaration of war, Germany has aimed at Algeria as much as at France, but in her own cowardly way she chose to fight the population without defense, perhaps fearing defeat otherwise. . . . Moreover, in all her dealings, Germany has proceeded, forgetful of the famous words of the Koran familiar to every Moslem, "God does not love traitors"² and forgetful of the enthusiasm, loyalty, and bravery of the Moslem and his fraternity of feeling with his brother Frenchmen."²¹

The general enthusiasm with which the decree of mobilization had been accepted continued to grow with the beginning of actual hostilities. As is always the case, in the first outburst of excited patriotic feeling, everyone was swept along on the popular wave of enthusiasm and wanted immediately to volunteer his aid to the government in performing some war service.²² Although the government appreciated the spirit that prompted the numerous offers which appeared during the first few days, it could not

¹⁸ *Le Figaro*, August 14th.

¹⁹ *Le Temps*, August 4th.

²⁰ On August 21st, the first day general volunteers were accepted, thousands of foreign volunteers appeared. *Le Figaro* made the rather caustic remark that France was at last getting dividends on the generous aid and noble sacrifices she had been making for so many years for other nations. (*Le Figaro*, August 22nd.)

²¹ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 6th.

²² Because of the crisis the government was facing and the call for national cooperation and a *union sacrée* government, many Frenchmen offered their services to the government—"perhaps in good faith judging themselves indispensable to the country, perhaps from motives of duty, sacrifice, ambition, or vanity." Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 170.

disrupt the existing organization to make places for these patriots who had no special war training. It was the task of the government, therefore, to keep the citizenry performing their usual duties at home, but at the same time to imbue them with the same spirit of patriotic fervor which filled those on the field of battle. A proclamation was issued on August 4th to this effect: "The civil population can serve best by doing their jobs at home, performing the duty that their capabilities allow, not striving for vain glory."

Sometimes the enthusiasm of youthful patriots was more troublesome than helpful, and the government had to turn their ardor to more profitable channels without dampening their spirit. In this respect a proclamation of the Patriotic Association of Youth was addressed to all the youth of France. Starting with the usual prefatory platitude which asked for cooperation and unanimity of purpose it also carried a word of warning, against too exuberant manifestations: "... Save your ardor for the day of fighting. Do not expend your energy in causing futile disturbances which are able to be turned to the moral advantage of the Germans."²³

Although the popular *union sacrée* was the product of the same enthusiastic patriotism the political cooperation of the representatives of the nation showed after the first few days little of the emotional upheaval which swept the country. Instead a gravity and resignation of tone appeared soon, which showed that the French realized the seriousness of the undertaking which they were facing.

"The state of war is the normal state of humanity—peace is the exception. . . . War restores the spirit of sacrifice and the feeling that what counts is not the individual, but the survival of the race. The state of war creates a national discipline which brings about the unity that nothing else can. Thus Catholics, Protestants, Jews, representatives of the aristocracy and of the C.G.T., members of all the parties serve on the same war committees in perfect accord. It is this unanimity which today remakes France."²⁴

The French *union sacrée* of 1914 was the more welcome since it furnished a welcome comparison with the events of 1870, which in so many respects, were discouragingly similar.

"France is now a nation of one mind, sure of its course, with a calm unknown in the history of its fevers," as compared with the France of 1870 "when there was a clamor of enthusiasm among the officers at the declaration of war, but the deputies were hesitant and troubled, and the army was therefore uncertain whether or not it had the support of the nation."²⁵

Through the efforts of the government, therefore, reenforced by the cooperation of the press, the national unanimity seemed to be permanently established by the third week in August. True, there had been evidences

²³ *Le Temps*, August 4th.

²⁴ *Le Figaro*, August 16th.

²⁵ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 5th.

that private quarrels and personal jealousies had not been permanently buried and would very likely turn up again, but by and large the country seemed to be standing firmly behind the principles of the *union sacrée*. Thus appeared such eloquent expressions of the national harmony as the following:

"This magnificent spirit of French fraternity is evidenced in everything, for everyone thinks—dreams of the same thing. There is a single hope for all and mutual tolerance as a result of this common feeling. The time has come to utilize the aid of all, indeed, that is the idea behind the Committee of National Relief on which are illustrious representatives of all the parties, doctrines and cults."²⁶

The most optimistic results were foretold for France because of the unbroken support the national union gave her, in contrast to the reported troubled conditions in Germany.

"The one thing which France has that Germany lacks, the factor that will inevitably decide the conflict in favor of France is the heroic certainty of the French soldier; in contrast to the German state of mind, which is troubled and uncertain since they fight without ideal or faith, is the French oneness of purpose and hope in the '*union sacrée*'."²⁷

"In declaring war Germany apparently counted on France's internal divisions, the failings of its ministers, and the resistance of the socialists, thinking that at the first signs of war, France would sacrifice itself in discord and anarchy. It failed to realize the fundamental unity of France and the strength of the *union sacrée* that will be realized to its fullest extent in this time of war."²⁸

To the careful observer, however, it could be seen that the popular *union sacrée* did not penetrate very deeply below the surface. • It was an emotional outgrowth of the desire for union felt by every Frenchman in the face of common danger; for the time being realization of a common purpose had so far superseded the time-worn causes for division that it might almost seem as if the latter had disappeared. In fact, however, they had not been disposed of definitely but merely laid aside for the present. Already several incidents had occurred which indicated possible trouble for the future. Quotations such as the following serve well to show the breaking down of social barriers resulting from the presence of a common force threatening the safety of all, but they fail to furnish proof of the beginnings of the more fundamental unity necessary.

"People accost each other unceremoniously, speak without knowing each other; two people passing, who don't know each other, don't hesitate a moment to exchange strategic plans most informally. . . . In these days of tragic beauty, not to adhere fully to the thought, to the wish of the country, is to betray it. That which divided us before, money, does not exist any more; now the same words, victory, defeat, exalt or depress all at the same time and in the same way; everyone has suppressed by instinct all that which might divide France and has appealed to all that which can unite it."²⁹

²⁶ *Le Temps*, August 14th.

²⁷ *Le Figaro*, August 14th.

²⁸ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 6th.

²⁹ *Le Figaro*, August 12th.

The underlying causes for political divisions were not affected; the majority of people continued to entertain the usual belief that the situation would be improved only if his own political party were at the helm, or at least cooperating in the government. With such opinions being voiced more and more often, a real party truce government in which each faction was represented was the only answer to the problem.

On August 3rd, at the time of the reorganization of the Cabinet, Poincaré had advised Viviani to make an enlargement. The Prime Minister, however, refused at that time, wishing neither to lose Socialist support nor to discard any of his colleagues.³⁰ Only qualified approval for Viviani's Cabinet, therefore, came from Conservative politicians, and as the war tension increased it became more and more evident that further changes would have to be made in the Ministry. Ever since the change of August 3rd had been announced with its trend more to the Left, the Conservative press had been declaring that the Viviani government could be no *union sacrée* government until the Conservative Republicans were represented.³¹ These references pointed obviously to the authors of the alliance system and the three year military law, Ribot and Barthou. At the same time, such opinions reflected the desire of Poincaré who again and again tried to urge a Ministerial change upon Viviani. In these efforts the President of the Republic emphasized the fact that "the country must come before all politics" and accused Viviani of having a "Cabinet of partisans who lacked the confidence of a great deal of the population."³² Viviani finally agreed that a reorganization of the Cabinet might be advisable. He confessed, however, that he did not wish to cross any one off who was on his present Cabinet but merely to add to it by creating some Ministers without portfolio.³³

On August 23rd a change in the Cabinet became even more imperative, for after the disastrous battle of Charleroi a change was made in the usual government communiqués which so far had been releasing only the most guarded of military information. The communication sent from headquarters on the evening of August 23rd gave an unmistakable picture of the reverses the French army had been suffering—reverses which had occasioned "the momentary abandonment of parts of territory in northern France." The effect of this announcement upon the people of France was unmistakable. Poincaré saw at once that a great national Ministry was

³⁰ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 510.

³¹ *Le Temps*, August 10th.

³² Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 170.

³³ Evidence that tentative plans for the reorganization of the Cabinet had already been suggested as early as August 10th is found in the charge of *Le Temps* that the Socialists had caused a distinct weakening of the value of the national effort toward reconciliation by their published statement opposing certain reactionary Republican candidates who had been suggested for the reorganized coalition Cabinet. *Le Temps*, August 10th.

absolutely necessary in order to have the country accept the terrible sacrifices that this situation would call for and in order to combat the disillusion that would inevitably result. The situation demanded a Cabinet enlarged and strengthened so that instead of being only an expression of the party victorious in the last elections, it would represent the entire nation.³⁴

With his decision of August 24th to add to his Cabinet Viviani, however, soon found that his troubles had just begun.³⁵ The masses of Frenchmen as a whole might be united in some semblance of a *union sacrée*, but apparently even the endangered existence of France was not a cause great enough to have much effect on the scheming politicians of France. This illuminating and at the same time disheartening discovery was reflected in Poincaré's memoirs which show his disillusionment.

"I was forced to look for the means of expressing in a ministerial reconstruction my formula of *union sacrée*, and I am shocked at the personal preoccupations, at the *partis pris*—seeing even political intrigues and cabals that hinder and dishearten me."³⁶

Despite the fact that one German army was invading Lorraine and another was threatening Northern France, the actions of the various politicians were still activated predominantly by purely partisan motives. They bartered with each other in their usual avaricious manner, seemingly entirely oblivious of anything but their own personal interests. Certainly the various conflicts and disputes of the French political leaders were most discouraging for any who hoped for a *union sacrée* Cabinet.³⁷

Viviani's desire to establish a double Ministry in some departments was based on the realization that it would rid him of the unpleasant duty of having to deprive of their portfolios some of those Ministers who had been doing their duty most efficiently. This suggested plan, however, was from the beginning doomed to failure. Besides the general opinion that such a system would lead to divided authority, many felt that the public in general would receive the impression that the incumbents had not wanted to leave their office. Even more important than these reasons was the simple one of Ministerial jealousy and selfishness; Millerand, for instance, flatly refused to share the War Ministry with Messimy.³⁸

The first possible candidate for the next Cabinet, whom Viviani approached on August 24th, was the troublemaker Clemenceau, who had

³⁴ Samné, Georges, *Raymond Poincaré* (Paris, 1933), pp. 144-147.

³⁵ In order to effect this reorganization of the Cabinet, following the rules of Parliament, Viviani sent his resignation to the President of the Republic, stating that "in the circumstances that trouble the country, it seems necessary to me to enlarge the foundations of the Ministry over which I preside." Immediately upon receiving Viviani's resignation, which carried with it, of course, the resignation of all his colleagues, Poincaré asked him to form a new Cabinet. *Le Temps*, August 28th.

³⁶ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 179.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-188.

³⁸ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 174.

already in many ways and in no uncertain terms showed his disapproval of the existing governmental regime. The cordial relations which had at first been declared between Clemenceau and Poincaré had not been maintained very long. Clemenceau had fretted at not being at the head of the government in such a time of national emergency, for as always he saw in himself forces for victory that he denied in others. During the first few days of August he had actively supported the creation of a *union sacrée*, but he was not the type of leader used to cooperation or to abiding by the concessions imposed by the party truce. He might have been less critical if the military events had been progressing more favorably to the French armies, but the more ominous the French situation became, the more indignant Clemenceau grew, and the more he attributed all the faults of the system to those directly responsible—Poincaré, Viviani, and the Cabinet. As had been expected, therefore, Viviani was unable to obtain any satisfaction from Clemenceau, when he approached him with his offer on August 24th. Clemenceau had decided that the Viviani Cabinet was doomed to failure, and so in his usual dogmatic way had determined to hold out for the presidency of the Council. Viviani, realizing this as well as did Poincaré, assured Poincaré that he would cede it to him if Poincaré wished. Poincaré refused, however, assuring Viviani that his position was safe since he had not lost the confidence of the Chamber and since "Clemenceau's hour hasn't come yet."

Clemenceau denied the accusations that others were making against him by saying that, though he had once wished to be the President of the Council, he now had no thought at all along that line.³⁹ Nevertheless he also refused the kind offer of Malvy, who volunteered to surrender his post, that of Minister of the Interior.⁴⁰ Clemenceau was showing in no uncertain way that he had indeed abandoned the principles of that *union sacrée* for which at first he had seemed to declare himself so enthusiastically. He even sternly admonished Malvy for not having enforced the Carnet B, despite the fact that many of the names on this list were those of prominent Socialist leaders, such as Jouhaux and Laval, who had since the very beginning of the war deserted their international cause in order to give all their energies to the cause of France. Despite Clemenceau's refusal,

³⁹ Suarez, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 438-447.

⁴⁰ Clemenceau explained in his newspaper that he refused the offer of Viviani because it was necessary to have "a leader who was a leader in the sense in which the situation demanded"—a condition which had not been realized. His refusal of a portfolio in Viviani's government was made with his customary violence. He wound up with the accusation that the administration was the victim of Catholic Generals (referring especially to Castelnau), who were responsible for the French defeats. "*Non, non, ne comptez pas sur moi. Dans quinze jours, on vous ouvrira le ventre. Non, non, je n'en suis pas. D'ailleurs, vous êtes victime des généraux de jésuitière. C'est ce Castelnau qui est cause des défaites lorraines.*" Michon, Georges, *Clemenceau* (Paris, 1931), pp. 155-157.

Poincaré advised Viviani to continue to try to enlist his aid, since "his ardors are apt to be dangerous," but all further efforts proved unavailing.⁴¹

Next to those of Clemenceau, Millerand's actions particularly represent the height of selfish political bargaining. Viviani felt that Millerand's cooperation in the Cabinet was practically essential, but he wanted also to maintain Messimy, who had been performing his duties most efficiently. He asked Millerand, therefore, to consent to a double Ministry of War. Millerand would have full independence for the direct administration of the war, while Messimy would keep the strictly military duties. Millerand, however, would accept only if he could also have charge of all communications with the "fighting army." This demand decreased the importance of the duties assigned to Messimy so much that a joint Ministry would be completely out of the question. Even before this question had been settled Millerand put forward a further demand as the price of his cooperation, namely that new prefects would be placed at the helm of the principal departments.⁴² Despite the unfairness of these requests Viviani finally had to give in, for Messimy's resignation was made inevitable by the force of the united pressure which was now brought against him by the Conservative Republicans.⁴³ Not only Millerand, but also Briand and Delcassé took up the denunciation of Messimy, apparently desiring to find a scapegoat for the French defeats. They joined Millerand in formulating a declaration to Viviani, which had almost the force of an ultimatum. It stated that none of them would even consider cooperating in his cabinet unless the dismissal of Messimy was assured.⁴⁴

Seeing the difficulties Viviani was having and the imminent prospect of his defeat, the inveterate Clemenceau played at this time what he hoped would be a trump card. He proposed to Noulens that the latter should try to ascertain the possibility of a Clemenceau Cabinet, which would include also Millerand, Briand, and Delcassé. Clemenceau's suggestion, however, was not heeded, for Messimy's resignation had laid the way open for Millerand to join the Viviani Cabinet, and the other two gladly followed him in this direction.

As far as Briand was concerned, he at first declined to enter the Cabinet unless both Clemenceau and Sembat would be in it. On August 25th, therefore, he refused Viviani's offer of the Ministry of Public Instruction. After further bickering he finally agreed to cooperate with Viviani, but

⁴¹ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 171.

⁴² Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 173-182.

⁴³ Augagneur's part in securing Messimy's resignations seems a bit petty. He warned him of the danger to his health of maintaining all his duties: "*Vous êtes fatigué, croyez-moi. Je suis médecin. Je vous affirme que vous finirez par devenir neurasthénique. Débarrassez-vous d'un fardeau trop lourd ou acceptez, tout au moins, de le partager.*" Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V., p. 180.

⁴⁴ Samné, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-149.

only upon his own conditions: he must be Vice President and have the portfolio of Justice. Viviani was uncertain what to do, but upon weighing the political situation, he prevailed upon Bienvenu Martin to cede this post to Briand. Thus was avoided what might have been a very troublesome situation.

Viviani next approached the veteran Delcassé, but he at first could only criticize the inactivity of the present diplomacy. Delcassé, along with Briand and Millerand, was convinced that Viviani's Cabinet was about at the end of its career, and for that reason was inclined to hold off. As Viviani's efforts elsewhere to form a Cabinet began to meet with more success, however, Delcassé changed his policy, finally declaring that he would be glad to join Viviani's Cabinet, but only as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Viviani was loath to ask Doumergue to give up this portfolio, but Delcassé was adamant in his refusal to join the Cabinet on any other terms.⁴⁵

"My name has a significance that no one is able to contest . . . it is my politics that triumph today. . . . All the world awaits me at the Quai d'Orsay."

Delcassé's conceit, while perhaps well-earned, was truly remarkable. One is inclined to agree with Poincaré's laconic statement, "It seems as though he might leave to others the care of writing his history." Doumergue lined up with Bienvenu-Martin at this time as one of the few Ministers willing to sacrifice his own interests to a great cause, the unity of the nation. Realizing that Delcassé's cooperation was necessary for a *union sacrée* Cabinet, he agreed at once to resign his portfolio: "In the present circumstances, I will serve where the need is."

One of Viviani's first steps on August 24th had been to speak to the Socialist leader, Sembat, with regard to cooperation in the Cabinet. The latter, however, had been unable to make any decision before first obtaining the consent of his party. Socialist support of the government's measures so far had been beyond criticism, but active Socialist participation in a coalition Cabinet was an untried field. However, the Socialist reply of August 25th removed any fears that Viviani might have had regarding a refusal of the Socialists to cooperate in the government. In fact, it went even farther than Viviani had intended by declaring: "We will sustain the Cabinet if we can have two portfolios, one for Guesde and one for Sembat."⁴⁶

The inclusion of Ribot in the Cabinet completed the new Ministry.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 173-182.

⁴⁶ The attitude of the Socialist Ministers toward their Conservative colleagues was naturally not overenthusiastic, despite their cooperation in a *union sacrée* government. Guesde was absent when Viviani presented the new Cabinet to Poincaré, but Sembat spoke for him, later confiding to Poincaré: "Guesde will be a bit vexed to see Ribot in the Cabinet; he likes neither his opinions nor his character. But as he is impelled by a very ardent patriotic spirit, you must use it quickly to reassure him. . . ." Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 182-188.

⁴⁷ Ribot, A., *op. cit.*, p. 22.

The addition of six new members, the four seasoned politicians, Briand, Delcassé, Millerand, and Ribot, together with the two Socialists, Sembat and Guesde, had been made possible only by the corresponding dismissal of six members of the August 3rd Cabinet. They included Noulens, a member of the Radical-Left, Messimy and Renoult, both Radical Socialists, and Raynaud, Couyba, and Gauthier, all members of the Democratic Left. Poincaré was none too happy over the necessary exclusion of these deputies from the reorganized *union sacrée* Cabinet, and prophesied:

"We will find, in the number of those eliminated, without exception, one or two who will not resign themselves willingly to this exclusion. They will not complain openly but will, henceforth, air their bitterness in the lobbies of the Chamber and will preserve for us (Viviani and me) a grudge as tenacious as it is secretive."⁴⁸

On August 26th, then, finally came the announcement of the reorganized and enlarged Viviani Cabinet. As presented in its final form it included members of all parties, except the Extreme Right.

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| President of Council | Viviani | Socialist-Republican |
| Vice President and Justice | Briand | Socialist-Republican |
| Interior | Malvy | Radical-Socialist |
| Foreign Affairs | Delcassé | Moderate Republican |
| War | Millerand | Republican Socialist |
| Marine | Augagneur | Republican Socialist |
| Colonies | Doumergue | Radical-Socialist |
| Commerce | Thomson | Moderate Republican |
| Finance | Ribot | Conservative Republican |
| Public Works | Sembat | Socialist |
| Agriculture | David | Moderate Republican |
| Public Instruction | Sarraut | Radical-Socialist |
| Work | Bienvenu-Martin | Radical-Socialist |
| Minister Without Portfolio | Guesde | Socialist |

In general the new Cabinet was very favorably received.⁴⁹ The Conservatives hailed the appointment of Delcassé, the founder of the Triple Entente, with the enthusiastic comment, "A better choice could not have been made; in fact, no other one was possible."⁵⁰ Millerand, the new Minister of War, was also accepted with joy by the Conservatives, who had disliked the political views of the Radical-Socialist Messimy. Though they had approved fully the efficient mobilization which had been carried out under his direction with very few errors, nevertheless Messimy's policy of terse, vague military reports, which from day to day had often been contradictory, had naturally led to much unrest.⁵¹ Millerand, on the other

⁴⁸ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 182-3.

⁴⁹ "Le nouveau cabinet est très favorablement accueilli par l'opinion." Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 186.

⁵⁰ *Le Figaro*, August 27th.

⁵¹ Messimy subsequently complained that he had been utterly powerless to do anything else, for during the months of the war the authority of the Commander-in-chief had been

hand, inaugurated at once a program of official daily communications to the press. Moreover he appointed Gallieni "to put Paris in a state of entrenched camp"—an action which was generally popular, since it gave a feeling of security by demonstrating daily that the government was doing something tangible in the way of preparation.⁵²

Even yet, however, despite the inclusion of Ribot in the Cabinet, there had not been an enlargement to the Right to correspond with the number of Deputies of the Left. Despite the talk of a *union sacrée* Ministry, the new Cabinet was really not one. It had been broadened toward the Left by the inclusion of two Socialists and a third Republican Socialist, but the three members of the Democratic Left, Raynaud, Couyba, and Gauthier, had all been removed, and aside from Ribot, the Right as represented by Barthou, Cochin, and de Mun, had been ignored. Poincaré especially regretted that the latter two had not been included to balance Sembat and Guesde. Viviani's and Malvy's objections had overruled this suggestion, however, for they had declared that the Parliament would not be able to understand.⁵³ The Conservative press was well aware of the reverse its interests had suffered by the exclusion of Conservative Deputies, regretting particularly the absence of Barthou, the author of the three year military law. In fact, it openly regretted that a true *union sacrée* Cabinet had not been formed.

"Once more parties have endangered France, although a nation in war has not the right to refuse the aid of any of her subjects, especially of those who have already given proof of their character and foresight, but should call together all those who inspire confidence."⁵⁴

Conservatives also regretted the omission of Clemenceau and Pichon, "who have been performing such outstanding services by their patriotic writings," but understood that the absence from the Cabinet of Clemenceau, at least, was due to his own decision to decline Viviani's invitation.⁵⁵ Poincaré also realized that the absence of Clemenceau was a serious point of weakness. He claimed that no question of personal feelings was involved, though Clemenceau was one of Poincaré's most bitter opponents. Further, he has written in his memoirs, that he foresaw the possible results for a *union sacrée* Cabinet of the opposition of a man like Clemenceau and even admitted that he had probably made an unpardonable mistake in not offering Clemenceau immediately the presidency of the Council.

so absolute that he had 'so to speak, known nothing' of the operations. It was he who, on August 25th, finally interfered by means of a formal order, to insist on the formation of an army of three corps for the defense of Paris, though the credit for this move went to his successor. (Renouvin, Pierre, *op. cit.*, p. 82.)

⁵² *Le Temps*, August 29th; *Le Figaro*, August 27th.

⁵³ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 182.

⁵⁴ *Le Figaro*, August 30th.

⁵⁵ *Le Temps*, August 28th.

"I did not do it because I would have committed a misuse of my authority and a great injustice in demanding from Viviani a resignation that nothing had motivated. Moreover, despite the great intellectual worth of Clemenceau, his patriotism, and worth, I am very distrustful of his sudden impulses, his changeableness, and the supreme scorn that he has for all men—with the exception of himself."⁵⁶

Immediately after the presentation of the new Cabinet, Clemenceau came to see Poincaré and openly scoffed at the idea of a *union sacrée* Cabinet. Hope of any possible cooperation from him was definitely ended. With the "malevolent violence and incoherence" of a man who had completely lost control of himself, he was supposed to have denounced Poincaré.

"Your cabinet is a bunch of nullities. You have no authority . . . your Ministry lacks confidence; disorder and defeat will soon appear with fatal results for the nation. The Socialists are not without ulterior motives and will sacrifice to their "*vives egoistes*" the destiny of France. And do you think Briand, Delcassé, and Millerand would support each other without hoping each will profit? You sacrifice the country to your egoism."⁵⁷

It is hard to say what the results would have been for the welfare of France as a whole, if Poincaré had accepted Viviani's offer to turn over the position of Prime Minister to Clemenceau. Despite the enthusiastic editorial of *Le Temps* to that effect, it is difficult to imagine Clemenceau cooperating with Delcassé and Millerand in a *union sacrée* Cabinet.⁵⁸

No particular press comment was made of the appointment of Guesde as a Minister Without Portfolio; everyone accepted it for what it was—a move to further assure Socialist support of the *union sacrée*. The accession of Guesde and Sembat into the Ministry, however, was vitally important, for it represented the last step taken by the Unified Socialist Party to show its complete reversal from the principles of internationalism and of "bourgeois opposition" to those of national defense and Ministerial participation.⁵⁹ The way in which the Socialists justified this change of policy is well illustrated in the following declaration, published soon after the announcement of Socialist participation in the new Cabinet.

"It is in consequence of great deliberation that the Socialist Party has authorized two of its members to enter the new government and has made them its delegates for national defense. All the representatives of Socialist groups in parliament have agreed to vouch for the grave responsibilities that they have consented to share. It had concerned only a question of rearranging the Ministry, of joining to the old government some new forces, of ordinary participation in a bourgeois government, neither our consent or that of our

⁵⁶ Poincaré showed a true appreciation of Clemenceau's character when he said: "*mais il ne voulait pas être ministre, il voulait être le ministre.*" (Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 180.)

⁵⁷ Clemenceau further accused Poincaré of having established on August 3rd a Cabinet of unimportant men in order to be more easily "*le maître.*" (Suarez, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 448-450.)

⁵⁸ *Le Temps*, August 28th.

⁵⁹ Buell, R. L., *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

friends would have been obtained. It is the future of France that is in question today. . . . It is necessary that the national unity, the renewed revelation of which comforted our hearts at the beginning of the war, manifests all its power. It has become necessary for the entire nation to raise itself for the defense of its soil and its liberty. The head of the government knows that there is a need of the help of all . . . and that in all the grave hours of history, 1793, 1870, it has been in the Socialists that the nation has put her confidence. It is in this spirit that our friends have entered the government. . . . Above all, the presence of our friends in the middle of the government will be for all the guarantee that the Republic is ready for the struggle to a finish. . . . Jaurés would have wished this cooperation. . . . We are fighting not only for the existence and the grandeur of France, but for liberty, the Republic, civilization. We fight so that the world, freed of the suffocating oppression of imperialism and atrocities, may enjoy peace. . . . By the persevering efforts of the Socialists will be assured the safety of France and the progress of humanity."⁶⁰

Thus for the first time since the organization of the party in 1905 an active member of the Unified Socialists was permitted to serve in a Ministry of the bourgeoisie. The spectacle was now afforded of Ribot working side by side with the Socialists who had just turned out his Ministry, and of Guesde once more cooperating with his former bitterest enemies, Millerand, Viviani, and Briand, whose "heresy" had excluded them from the Socialist Party.⁶¹ The Cabinet was indeed in many respects a true *union sacrée* Ministry. The question was whether its success would equal the hopes placed in it.

⁶⁰ *Le Temps*, August 29th.

⁶¹ Buell, R. L., *op. cit.*, p. 95.

Chapter VI

MILITARY EVENTS, CENSORSHIP, AND THE PRESS

On September 3rd, as a complete surprise to all France, came the proclamation of the President of the Republic, telling of the Ministerial decision to move the seat of government from Paris to Bordeaux. The praiseworthy calm and self-control with which this proclamation was received were all the more remarkable in view of the limited knowledge of the real military situation that most Frenchmen had had and the great shock which this proclamation must, therefore, have created. It was the first real indication that the French government had given that the military situation was very serious. The governmental program of censorship had been officially declared by the law of August 4th which forbade the publishing of any news other than that communicated by the government. All information regarding mobilization, the movement of the armies, and diplomatic or military operations, which might in any way favor the enemy or exercise a bad influence on the army or the population was thus completely controlled by the official authorities. Because of the strict punishment to be meted out for deviation from the provisions of the law, the press soon found it much simpler to accept a preventive rather than a repressive censorship and thus print only news which the government sent out for publication. The stern attitude of the government with regard to the press was not due entirely to the present crisis, but was the result of sad experience. France had not yet forgotten the tragic consequences of an indiscreet article which had appeared in the French press in 1870 and which had divulged entirely too much of MacMahon's plans. Clemenceau at that time had declared: "The press, in spite of its intention to perform real service, impedes the government more than it helps it."¹ This view was still held by many officials and it was to obviate the possibility of any such unfortunate incident happening again that a strict military censorship was established. The effectiveness of this censorship appears clearly in a comparison of the actual military events during the first month of the war with the corresponding information given out by the official government communiqués.

At the beginning of the war the German plan of campaign, a Moltke adaptation of the original Schlieffen plan, had called for a strong right wing to sweep through Belgium and Northern France in a great encircling movement. It was to pass Paris on the West and then turn Eastward to roll the whole French army into Alsace as far South as the Swiss frontier, crushing it between the advancing German army from the West and the subsidiary force in the East which had been slowly withdrawing into

¹ *Echo de Paris*, August, 3rd.

Alsace-Lorraine in order to lure on the main body of the French Army. On August 2nd, the first day of general mobilization, therefore, the Germans occupied Luxemburg over the protests of the government and began concentrating their Fourth Army on its territory. The German declaration of war on France did not come till the 3rd, but as early as the 30th, and again by official admission on the 31st, German patrols had crossed the French frontier. This was a fact of no military importance in itself but one that the French press could play up greatly to aid the French *esprit de corps*, for it seemed to give positive proof that France was fighting a war of self defense against German aggression. German invasion of Belgium began on the 4th, after the Belgian refusal of the ultimatum which demanded free passage for German troops. Six brigades of infantry crossed the Belgian frontier on the 4th, and attacked Liège on the 5th. German troops entered the city on the 7th, but the forts held out until reduced by the shell fire of the heavy howitzers, the last one falling on the 17th to the German forces under Emmich.²

The first definite proof of the existence of government censorship occurred in connection with the taking of Liège. While the facts that were given were in and of themselves correct, the final impression produced was intentionally an erroneous one. The taking of the city was treated as a purely minor incident, of very little importance as compared with the resistance of the forts. Day after day, during the first two weeks of August, the enthusiasm of the public was rallied by this emphasis on the resistance of the forts—a resistance which was built up by the press as a defense almost impossible to fail. Therefore when the forts finally did fall on the 17th, the press thought it better to give no recognition of the fact, and deliberately led the French public to believe that the situation in Liège had not changed since the 7th and that the forts were still holding. This inevitable conclusion was fostered both by indirect reference, as the statement of August 21st (“Liège continues to keep the Germans from using the important railroad lines,”³) and by definite assertion, as the official communiqué of August 25th (“The forts of Liège still hold.”⁴). *Le Temps* mentioned the fact that while the Liège forts were still holding, they were no longer firing, but the other despatches failed to include this important qualifying statement.⁵ As other events of more vital interest came up to occupy the first columns after this time, opportunity was given for the Liège items to be slowly withdrawn from the military communications. The necessity for maintaining the fiction of the continued resistance of the forts had been abolished, with the progress of military events much nearer home than Liège, events which gave silent proof that either the forts had

² Cruttwell, C.R.M.F., *A History of the Great War* (Oxford, 1934) pp. 1-13.

³ *Le Temps*, August 21st.

⁴ *Le Temps*, August 25th.

⁵ *Le Temps*, August 23rd.

fallen or their resistance was of no avail in hindering the general German advance. At no time, however, was there ever a direct admission in the press that all the Liège forts had succumbed.

This incident suffices to show the general technique of the government press service, namely to stress vigorously at first a victory or an unbreaking resistance as long as the occasion warranted, and then, if at all possible, without any direct admission of reversal, to let the matter quietly disappear from the press reports.

It has sometimes been said that the Belgian resistance was a misfortune for France; its momentary success led Joffre to believe that the Germans did not want Liège very badly and to expect their main attack farther South. This may indeed have been true, for the repeated press reports proclaiming Liège's unflinching resistance must have led toward a feeling of security. Either the number of forces against Belgium were not very strong, or else the German threat was not as dangerous as had been feared.⁶ Certainly the very success of the Belgian's daily resistance cloaked the weight of the main German columns and misled the Allies' intelligence departments, who did not see at once that the First German Army under Von Kluck, 320,000 strong, was mobilized on the German frontier during this time, and was not affected by the siege of Liège. It entered Belgium on the 14th and on the night of the 15th took its appointed place in the line, well beyond Liège, having passed North of the city. The Second German Army, under Bülow, 260,000 strong, had already passed South of Liège.⁷ Since the Germans reached the line laid down in the mobilization schedule on the 20th, it does not seem that the Belgian resistance, though unexpected, interfered with the German plans.⁸ The great German advance, therefore, began on the 17th, the First Army leading the way and the others following one day later, the speed of their encircling movement being regulated by the leader. The Belgians, deprived of support owing to the mistaken French plan, decided to preserve their army by falling back on the entrenched camp of Antwerp. This was a wise move since its location there served as a latent menace to the German communications, so that the Germans were compelled to detach two reserve corps to guard that city. With their immediate passage now clear, the Germans were able to enter Brussels on August 21st and on the same day appear before Namur, the last fortress barring the Neuse route into France.⁹

Although no mention of the advance of the First German Army was made in the press until the 20th, the official French communiqué of August 21st announced abruptly that the German cavalry had entered Brussels. The matter was given casual treatment, however, from the angle that no

⁶ Cruttwell, C.R.M.F., *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁷ Hart, Liddell, *A History of the World War* (London, 1930) p. 79.

⁸ Cruttwell, C.R.M.F., *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15.

⁹ Cruttwell, C.R.M.F., *op. cit.*, p. 20.

one had expected the Belgian Army to sustain alone the tremendous attack from the greatly overwhelming number of Germans; with the cooperation of the French and English, however, added to the Belgian forces, the German advance was expected to be stopped in the near future. The papers of August 22nd also carried news of the beginning of the attack on Namur, and three days later a very brief announcement—less than four lines—of its fall was made. No particulars at all were given, and no comment was made.¹⁰ In view of this, one can easily understand why there were at that time rumors of discontent in Paris regarding the government's strict censorship of military news.¹¹

From the beginning, however, aside from the siege of Liège, the French press had placed most of its emphasis on the progress of events in Alsace and Lorraine, for it was here that the main body of French troops were concentrated for the French offensive, Plan 17A. For this reason, therefore, the press gave as brief mention as possible to the French retreat in the West, while it discussed in the fullest detail the campaign in Alsace-Lorraine. The French offensive opened on August 7th, with the advance of a detached Army Corps into upper Alsace. This move was intended partly as a military distraction and partly for its political and psychological effect, since for forty years the thought of *revanche* had been smoldering in the minds of all patriotic Frenchmen. The initial success of the campaign resulted in the taking of Mulhausen and Altkirch.¹² This event was heralded by the press with the greatest of joy and the most enthusiastic headlines as being an important strategic advance and as presaging as early German defeat; on August 11th, however, when news of the retaking of Mulhausen by a counter-attack of the Germans was given, the importance of the event was minimized by the press. It then declared that the French offensive of upper Alsace was of much greater strategic importance, and that the French occupation of the heights around Mulhausen, which still held, was important strategically rather than the mere occupation of the city itself. The following headline in *Le Matin* was typical of the attitude of the French press in deprecating this success of the German counter-offensive: "*Aucune operation militaire importante n'a eu lieu depuis la bataille de Liège.*"¹³

¹⁰ Although the fall of Namur had been announced the day before, on the 26th, *Le Matin* declared that Namur had not been taken but was preparing further resistance. On the 30th came the report that it had at last fallen as a result of the German bombardment. It is rather difficult to understand just what lay behind these reports and denials, for all the other papers announced without contradiction the fall of Namur on the 23rd. Since the city itself did not fall till the 26th, however, this may have been to what *Le Matin* was referring.

¹¹ In appealing to the government for more detailed military information the press charged that the scarcity of news fostered the growth of defeatism. (*Le Temps*, August 25th.)

¹² Cruttwell, C.R.M.F., *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹³ *Le Matin*, August 11th.

For the following days the headlines emphasized the French advance into Alsace-Lorraine along the line of the Vosges Mountains and the general success of the French offensive on the left. Here again no definite misstatements were made, but the emphasis was rather oddly placed. Small gains were interpreted as having great strategic importance; definite setbacks were to rectify the line.¹⁴

The French offensive was renewed on the 16th by a larger force under General Pau, which actually reached the Rhine; it retook Altkirk and Mulhausen in its general advance, thus extending the French line from Metz to Strassburg. However, the French offensive against Saarbùrg was unsuccessful in a two day battle from August 19th to 21st and was therefore forced back again into France.¹⁵ At the same time the Second French Army launched its offensive; by August 20th it had advanced 15 miles to Morchingen, where it was defeated and forced back. Thus, by the evening of the 21st, both Armies were again in France.¹⁶ By a simple process of dwelling on the gains effected, such as the retaking of Mulhausen, and by minimizing the losses, the general impression obtained from the press despatches again was that the French offensive was successful.

A mistake commonly made by the civilian population in a war, one that was evidently shared even by the military staffs in 1914, was the belief that the country whose army was occupying enemy soil was definitely on the winning side of the struggle. The purpose of a war, however, is to destroy the enemy forces; from the strategical standpoint mere occupation of a corner of enemy territory is not very significant. The civilian population of both France and Germany were victims of this same mistaken impression that territorial loss presages defeat, with the result that the chief object of French press emphasis at this time was the French gains in Alsace-Lorraine. However, this emphasis did have the advantageous result of helping to bolster up the French morale during the latter part of August when the advance of the German right wing through southern Belgium was proceeding at such an alarming rate.

At that, however, the press despatches during the third week of the war were not any too encouraging, not even the reports of the French offensive in Alsace-Lorraine. On the 22nd came the report that the French in Lorraine had withdrawn to a line between Nancy and Donon,¹⁷ and the next day brought the news that the French troops had had to retreat along the Nancy front.¹⁸ With the decisive battle being started on the French left wing, the French had to recall more of their troops from the right, in

¹⁴ *Le Journal*, August 14, also *Le Matin*, *L'Echo de Paris*, *le Temps*, *le Figaro*, August 11-15th.

¹⁵ Hart, Liddell, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

¹⁶ Hart, Liddell, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

¹⁷ *Le Matin*, August 22nd.

¹⁸ *Le Matin*, August 23rd.

particular those around Donon and the hill of Saales. Thus the Germans were able to occupy Luneville, the announcement being given to the French public on August 24th.

With this statement, the press made the declaration, all too true, that the main theatre of events was in the North and that the slight changes back and forth on the French right wing were really of no great significance.¹⁹ This statement was occasioned of course by the cessation of the French offensive and the withdrawal of the French troops, but was a complete reversal of the former French policy. The emphasis was now shifted from the importance of the military activities in Alsace-Lorraine and the success of the French offensive there, to the situation in the North on the Belgian frontier and the progress of the German offensive. This change in press policy cannot be called entirely the result of a deliberate decision to change the center of attention for the public, rather is it a natural reflection of the change in military tactics. On the whole, the changing emphasis on the theatre of events by the French press represented fairly accurately the changed views of the French military staff. The press emphasis on military operations in Alsace-Lorraine was not altogether a deliberate attempt of the military staff to delude the French public as to the true state of affairs. As would be expected, the first interest of the French after the declaration of war had been in the carrying through of their own offensive, particularly since it met with initial success. Moreover, apparently an inefficient intelligence service had not been able at first to catch the full significance of the advance of the German right wing, for it had not been till some days later that the moving of French troops farther to the left had begun. The change of press emphasis to the North after the 20th, therefore, can be said to be mainly a shift in emphasis to correspond to the shift of the military staff. This does not mean, of course, that the military department, in charge of the censorship bureau, did not use its powers to hold back certain bits of information and emphasize others in order to procure a particular point of view. Thus the retaking of Mulhausen on the 19th, as mentioned before, was heralded with great joy as a "decisive victory of great importance to the French,"²⁰ while the loss of Luneville to the Germans was summed up in the words of *Le Temps*: "The occupation of this unfortified town has no military importance whatsoever."²¹

When it became evident to the French that the enemy was in Belgium, they attacked northward toward Arlon and Neufchateau. Since the offensive was launched on the 21st, the same day that the German Armies of the center began their advance, the two Armies met the next day in the forest of Ardennes. In the resulting battle of Charleroi, the French were quickly and decisively defeated in one of the bloodiest days of the war;

¹⁹ *Le Journal*, August 24th.

²⁰ *Le Matin*, August 21st.

²¹ *Le Temps*, August 26th.

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twenty-five per cent of all the French troops engaged in the struggle were mowed down by the German machine guns and rifle fire.²² As would be expected, French reports on the battle of Charleroi leave exceedingly much to be desired in the way of specific military information. It has been said that during the war the French learned as much about Charleroi as the Germans did about the Battle of the Marne! It is certain that the French did not know much about Charleroi at this time. The last minute news bulletin in *Le Matin* for the 25th gave a report on the progress of events which ended by saying: "The result is that until Sunday the Germans have been checked in every respect."²³ There was no mention of Charleroi on the 26th in *Le Matin* or any other newspaper. The headlines merely announced: "*Lendemain d'un grand choc—une bonne journée pour nos armées—elles prennent l'offensive sur deux points.*" The public was then informed that the French held all the passes in the Ardennes and that the "calm decision of Joffre to stop his offensive at a favorable moment had been most opportune."²⁴

The *Echo de Paris* mentioned the offensive at Charleroi in its last minute news bulletin for the 24th, but said that it would be necessary to wait two or three days before judging the results.²⁵ On the next day announcement was given of the French decision to maintain the defensive for a few days until the opportune moment should arise for a vigorous offensive. This decision was presented immediately after the announcement: "The British offensive has not reached its goal." Perhaps no connection was meant to be conveyed, but the natural supposition would be otherwise.²⁶ The last minute bulletin for the next day, August 26th, again carried news of Charleroi, including the following ominous statement: "It has been no secret that a retard in our offensive in Belgium has been necessary to combine and coordinate the three armies."²⁷ The press at no time made a direct admission that the French were defeated; at the same time they found it necessary, though without any direct statement thereupon, to account for the outcome of the battle by declaring that between 700,000 and 800,000 Germans, who occupied the advantageous positions, had been opposed to the French and English forces of not over 440,000.²⁸ This same idea was presented by *Le Temps* which declared: "Since the majority of our forces have been originally directed toward the frontier of Alsace Lorraine, we have had only a part of our Army in Belgium. Therefore, we see in the combats which have just taken place only the preliminaries

²² Hart, Liddell, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

²³ *Le Matin*, August 25th.

²⁴ *Le Matin*, August 26th.

²⁵ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 21st.

²⁶ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 25th.

²⁷ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 26th.

²⁸ The German force at the most did not include over 580,000 troops, and probably much less, since nine divisions had already been withdrawn, six being sent to Russia, two to Antwerp, and one to Maubeuge.

of the first great battle."²⁹ Although using the headlines, "*Le resultat en est reste nul*," *Le Journal* presented Charleroi almost in the light of a French victory;³⁰ it stressed the fact that the French lines remained intact, and that therefore the Germans had not been able to break through.³¹

The press treatment of the events at Mons was much the same as for Charleroi, the explanation being made that the English "were greatly outnumbered and had retreated only after having inflicted enormous losses on the enemy."³² This became the stock formula for every reverse suffered by the allies during the rest of the war. The disastrous defeat suffered was thus in the main completely ignored by the press. In the light of the military events which had taken place and the exceedingly non-committal press communiqués, it was obvious that discontent with the governmental censorship developed.

Even as early as August 13th, an editorial in *Le Figaro* appealing for the "truth" had declared that "France, in the new state of morale created by the war, is ready to accept everything." It was claimed that the authorities no longer needed to censor the news which was given out because Frenchmen would not disclose anything they should not. The editorial had concluded with the rather revealing statement that a knowledge of the true situation would save France from the panic often produced by false news.

"France must have truth . . . it is ready to accept everything, even the inherent alternatives of conflict which it knows will be very long and uncertain. They speak of the legitimate desire to be careful of the public's nerve. They don't have to be careful; we've decided to bear all. The word of the President of the Republic has already been quoted: We will know how to be quiet about that which we should not say, but we will not say that which is not true. It is good to repeat this to calm public opinion which is afraid of false news which tries to shake their strength. The departments know very little of what is going on; the soldiers even less . . . why not let all the newspapers reach the army. So long as the Secretary of War exercises his power of severe control over them, no false news can filter through and all other news should be known. The French soldier will gain in courage and endurance if he understands better the great cause he serves. . . ."³³

²⁹ *Le Temps*, August 26th.

³⁰ *Le Journal*, August 26th.

³¹ This statement is interesting as showing the subtle psychological change from the offensive to the defensive war philosophy evidenced after the Battle of Charleroi—a change passed over in the press with no further comment.

³² The British forces had landed in France on the 14th, getting in line south of the Belgian frontier in order to advance to Mons on the 22nd. Learning that German troops were in western Belgium in considerable numbers, they had planned to launch an offensive against them, but on August 23rd, they were attacked by the First German Army and narrowly escaped disaster. Added to the fact that they were greatly outnumbered (there were almost three times as many Germans as English engaged in the struggle) was the element that the English were greatly discouraged at the none too promising outlook existing in the camp of their allies and wanted more than anything else to throw the whole matter up and go back to England. (Cruttwell, C.R.M.F., *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22.)

³³ *Le Figaro*, August 13th.

In view of the military situation existing on August 25th, the rise of an even more vigorous opposition to the military censorship was clearly explainable; for three weeks France had been kept largely ignorant of the true course of events. The present gravity of the situation made at last a partial explanation unavoidable, but the public realized that much information was probably still being kept back by the censorship. The scarcity of news had served as a good breeding ground for all sorts of rumors, which had led to the growth of discouragement and demoralization. The press, therefore, led the appeal for a release from government restrictions on the official communiqués. On August 25th, *Le Temps* declared that it would be much less dangerous to tell the people the truth of what was going on than to "let them seize some small bit of truth which they had heard by chance and to embroider it according to their mood." *Le Temps* qualified its appeal for a more lenient censorship, however, with a recognition of the fact that a certain amount of caution was necessary in the government communiqués and agreed that specific military information as, for instance, the number of soldiers in an army corps, should in any case be omitted.³⁴ Further editorial comment on August 26th declared that the essential role of the government, the maintenance of national discipline and order, was threatened just as greatly by "panics of reason as by panics of the crowd." The government was accused of using the press only to prepare public opinion for victory rather than for showing the struggle necessary for victory. It was also criticized for letting the question of politics enter the field of national defense. The editorial further stated that when the government through the press gave the impression of truthfulness and sincerity, the country's forces of resistance were correspondingly strengthened, but instead the apparent lack of frankness and decision had resulted in a lack of confidence in the government and a hesitant military attitude.³⁵ Thus did the press reflect the rising discontent of a great percentage of the French population who resented the fact that the government apparently did not trust them and who felt that the real truth was being kept from them by the "hushing up" policy of the government. As if in direct answer to these appeals for the truth, there appeared on August 25th the communiqué which served to expose abruptly the entire military crisis. It came as a severe shock to all of France, for Poincaré, along with the Cabinet, had been as ignorant of the true course of military operations as the average Frenchman whose entire knowledge of the situation was drawn from the government despatches. For all of them, then, this communiqué was a revelation. It was a triple confession of defeat, invasion, and the loss of Alsace and produced a severe strain upon the French morale.

"We have not been able to enter Belgium.... The French Army remains on the defensive.... Our losses are important.... It will be premature to count them....

³⁴ *Le Temps*, August 25th.

³⁵ *Le Figaro*, August 26th.

One is bound evidently to regret that the offensive plan, through faults in its execution, has not attained its end. All France deplores the momentary abandonment of portions of annexed territory that we had occupied. On the other hand, certain parts of the national territory will suffer from the events for which they will be the theatre. . . . Some parts of the German cavalry have penetrated in the region of Roubaix-Tourcoing."³⁶

The reception accorded to this most disheartening disclosure by the population of France seemed to show that they were indeed going to prove themselves superior to the circumstances facing them.

The official governmental military communication to the press for the 26th announced that for the time being the French would stop their offensive and would begin a slow withdrawing movement toward the South but would take up the offensive again as soon as a favorable opportunity should arise.³⁷ For the next several days, then, military news of the West was concerned mainly with the heroic defense of Nancy, the burning of Louvain by the Germans, and the successes and checks of the French offensive between the Vosges Mountains and Nancy.³⁸ Meanwhile the First German Army was proceeding in its encircling movement through Southern Belgium and Northern France at a terrific speed, entering Cambrai on the 26th, passing Peronne on the 28th, St. Quentin on the 29th, reaching Amiens on the 30th, leaving Noyon behind on the 31st, and Compiègne on September 1st, and being at Chantilly, only 25 miles from Paris, on the 2nd.³⁹

In regard to this driving offensive of the German right wing, the censorship of the French press made itself again felt. The general tenor of the reports on the military situation in the west was all the same: "The situation in the West is unchanged; French resistance continues; the French line is withdrawing a little, but the Germans are incurring severe losses from the unremitting struggle and from the increasing difficulty of securing sufficient supplies; the progress of the enemy forces us to cede a little territory, but the morale of the French troops remains unshaken."⁴⁰

As little specific information as possible was given in regard to the position of the First German Army, the specific points in its advance that were mentioned were always several days behind the actual progress of the Germans; for instance, *Le Temps* of September 2nd announced that the English were defeated near Cambrai and the French near Peronne.⁴¹ Since it was on August 26th, however, that the Germans had reached Cambrai, and on the 28th, Peronne, the press report was thus almost a week late.

Despite the best efforts of the press, however, Paris became increasingly aware of the approaching German army and the impending crisis as refugees poured into the capital. Therefore, in order to avert the condition of

³⁶ Samné, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-146.

³⁷ *Le Figaro*, August 26th.

³⁸ *Le Journal*, August 26-29th.

³⁹ Hart, Liddell, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-4.

⁴⁰ *Le Matin*, *Le Figaro*, *L'Echo de Paris*, *Le Temps*, *Le Journal*, August 26th-31st.

⁴¹ *Le Temps*, September 2nd.

near panic which was arising in Paris and in order to try to turn the attention of the country as much as possible from the ominous advance of Bülow and Kluck, the press emphasized increasingly from August 22nd on the "tremendously important" part being played by the Russian offensive on the Eastern front.

The Russian plan of campaign, as originally worked out with the French, had called for an offensive into East Prussia by the 15th day after mobilization; the Russian cavalry did cross the frontier into East Prussia on August 15th, but having made no adequate preparation, had had to fall back again the next day. The entire Army therefore had not begun its advance until the 17th. After a preliminary skirmish near the frontier, the German Army had retreated about 20 miles and prepared to fight at Gumbinnen. Though they were winning the battle, because of superior numbers both in infantry and artillery, the news of the approaching Second Russian Army from the South decided them to order a retreat. By this time the German General Headquarters had replaced the commanding general with Hindenburg and Ludendorff, who were able to surround and destroy the greater part of the Second Russian Army on the 25th at Tannenberg. Over 92,000 Russian prisoners were added to the toll of 50,000 Russian dead. The Germans then turned to the East, where they were able to so confound the Russians in the swamps around the Masurian lakes that they had won a second victory, capturing 45,000 prisoners. Altogether the Russians had probably lost 250,000 men in these two battles.⁴²

Discouraging as the real situation in the East was for France's ally, it was nevertheless upon the progress of this Russian offensive that the French press placed its emphasis. With this theme French hope was buoyed up as the situation in the West grew more and more ominous.

As early as the 17th, press announcements related that the Russians had begun their attacks in East Prussia,⁴³ and on the 22nd came the news of the Russian success at Gumbinnen.⁴⁴ Few particulars were available, however, and it was really not until several days later, after the collapse of the French offensive in the West and the battles of Charleroi and Mons, that the French press seized on the Russian advance in East Prussia as the rallying point round which to bolster up French morale.

The advantages of building up the French hopes on the Russian advance were great, for because of the element of distance few of the French knew anything at all about the military situation in the East except that which appeared through the regular channel of the press. Although there is no way of knowing to what extent the French censorship held back information regarding Russian losses and to what extent this policy was due merely to ignorance or misinformation, it seems fairly certain that the French

⁴² Cruttwell, C.R.M.F., *op. cit.*, pp. 38-48.

⁴³ *Le Journal*, August 17th.

⁴⁴ *Le Journal*, August 22nd.

government must have been aware of the defeats the Russians were suffering. In fact, the press devoted much of its attention to a denial of the German reports of great Russian losses, reports which had come to the notice of the French through reading neutral newspapers. As the situation in the West grew more tense, however, increasing stress was laid on the importance of the Russian offensive, which according to the French was advancing toward the heart of Germany while the majority of the German forces were engaged in France.

The press report on the battle of Gumbinnen, which occurred on the 21st, appeared in the last minute news bulletin for that same day in *L'Echo de Paris* and in the rest of the French papers by the 22nd.⁴⁵ However, although the battles of Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes occurred between August 25th and 27th, the French press reports for the next week all declared without contradiction that the Russian offensive was continuing through East Prussia. Front page headlines for *Le Journal* on the 25th proclaimed, "*L'Armée russe marche sur Berlin*," and the accompanying article announced the Russian victory and the German retreat, "which is not a defeat, but a complete rout toward Berlin, followed by the Russians."⁴⁶ The official report from Saint Petersburg, dated August 28th, when the reports from the two battles were unquestionably known, was as follows:

"The offensive of the Russian Army is continuing in East Prussia with great success. The Germans are retreating hastily toward Königsberg and Allenstein. They evacuated in haste the region of the Mazurenland. The Russians have not been stopped in that most difficult land of which they occupied yesterday the Western outlets. . . . One hundred cannons have been taken from the enemy."⁴⁷

The same day came the announcement that after the defeat of Gumbinnen most of the German Army had fled in disorder toward the West, and that the Russians had been successful in turning the German left wing so that the enemy was forced to retreat 65 kilometers to the East of the Vistula; the first line of defense in East Prussia had been abandoned by the Germans.⁴⁸ On the 30th the Russians asserted that they had entered Königsberg and Allenstein and that a general German retreat had taken place.⁴⁹

One of the few indications that any of the papers gave that anything was taking place in East Prussia beyond "the general Russian advance toward Königsberg" came in an item in the last minute news of *L'Echo de Paris* for the 28th. It declared that due to the peculiar position of Poland between Eastern Prussia and Galicia, it would be necessary for

⁴⁵ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 21st, *Le Matin*, August 22nd.

⁴⁶ *Le Journal*, August 25th.

⁴⁷ *Le Journal*, *Le Matin*, *L'Echo de Paris*, August 28th.

⁴⁸ *Le Journal*, August 28th.

⁴⁹ Such an advance had never been made by the Russians.

the Russians, before passing beyond the Polish frontier, to even up their front for a combined attack against the Germans and the Austrians in East Prussia and in Galicia; for the time being, therefore, the Russians would need "a very brief delay" in order to straighten out their base of operations. Any possibility that this might have led to lessened confidence in the Russian offensive was prevented by the next article on the same page, which referred to the German evacuation of Mazurenland and Russian approach toward Königsberg.⁵⁰ And in similar optimistic fashion did the other papers cover the events on the eastern front during the last week of August, completely ignoring the true state of affairs.⁵¹ In reality, however, the First Russian Army had fallen into a confused route after the 27th, Commander Rennenkampf leaving his troops and fleeing 80 miles to Kovno with his staff. Certainly it was as well for the morale of the French people that they did not know the real situation in the East, for upon the success of this Russian offensive the French had placed their hopes after their own retreat in the West.⁵²

Although no direct admission was ever made that the Russian advance in the East had suffered any reverses, the beginning of September found a different interpretation being placed on the importance of the Russian offensive. Under the headline, "*Effets de l'offensive russe*" a long editorial brought forth the view that the prime importance of the Russian offensive was not the final occupation of Berlin but the division of the German troops on the Western front, a division necessary in order to provide forces to send to the Eastern frontier to meet the Russian advance toward Berlin.⁵³ After the first of September, therefore, the stress on the Russian offensive in East Prussia was mainly abandoned; the situation in Northern France was by now so serious that further attempts at evasion were impossible. The state of mind in Paris as the German right advanced closer and closer during the last week of August and first days of September can only too easily be imagined. By September 2nd, many of the 500,000 who eventually left Paris had departed. It was in this situation then that the governmental proclamation appeared on September 3rd, telling of the Ministerial decision to move the seat of government to Bordeaux.

⁵⁰ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 28th.

⁵¹ On September 5th, in speaking of the death of Samsonof "on the field of battle" there was mention of a "purely local reverse," (*Le Temps*, September 5th).

⁵² Cruttwell, C.R.M.F., *op. cit.*, pp. 43-48.

⁵³ *L'Echo de Paris*, August 31st.

THE FLIGHT TO BORDEAUX

The proclamation moving the government from Paris to Bordeaux was not the result of any sudden Ministerial panic, but one which had been weighed carefully and thoroughly. Exactly one week elapsed between the first time that the military staff brought up this question and the day when the final decision to move to Bordeaux was made. On August 26th, the day after the formation of the new Cabinet and the appointment of Gallieni as Military Governor of Paris, a Council of Ministers was called to discuss the defense of Paris. Gallieni informed Millerand that the rate of the German advance made it probable that before four or five days the enemy's cavalry might appear before Paris. Upon hearing of Gallieni's appraisal of the situation, the Socialist Sembat expressed the view that the population should be warned immediately. No action, however, was taken but on August 29th another meeting of the Council of Ministers was held. At this time Millerand proposed the departure of the government in case of the investment of Paris. The Council split immediately over the suggestion; Poincaré, as representing the most conservative element present, did not even want to discuss it but expressed a desire that the matter should be entirely dropped; "It is premature to discuss such a suggestion." Guesde and Sembat, on the other hand, made the radical suggestion that in the present emergency the population of Paris should be armed; they felt too that if the government did depart from Paris, some members should remain in Paris to represent it.¹

During these days of crisis, as the military situation was becoming increasingly grave, Clemenceau's opposition to the government was growing correspondingly more bitter and vindictive. His articles in *L'Homme Libre* were filled with anger and rage and were even harsher than usual.² He demanded especially that Poincaré should call the Legislature together because of the gravity of the situation. It was under his inspiration that various Deputies, Dubost, in particular, were aroused to declare that if the government did not call the Legislature, it would be assuming "the most heavy responsibilities." As was mentioned before, the Legislature had not been closed by an official decree of closure after the August 4th session, but had been merely dismissed temporarily. Thus it was still in session legally, and the Presidents of the two houses, Dubost and Deschanel, were free to call it in the conditions foreseen by rules. In fact, however, the case for a meeting of the Legislature at this moment was slight; it could not

¹ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 188-215.

² Saurez, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 446-452.

possibly be of much aid to a country on the eve of a decisive military battle and was much more likely to be a disturbing factor. In a time of national emergency such as this, the unhindered action of the executive was a desirable condition.³ Clemenceau, however, insisted that Parliament must be called, if for no other reason than to prevent Gallieni, the Military Governor of Paris, from preparing the establishment of a *commune* in Paris. He caused further trouble by protesting in a most insulting fashion against the sending of territorial troops to Morocco and demanded also a more effective cooperation from the Japanese Army. These violent attacks against the government found their echo in an increased agitation in political circles and in the growth of a parliamentary group insisting on an immediate convocation of the Chambers. Such an attitude showed little respect for the *union sacrée*, for it showed a lack of confidence in the government, and, together with the corresponding discouraging reports from the front, gave rise to the growth of a defeatist sentiment. "My mail swells," reported Poincaré, "but only with criticisms, complaints, and reproaches; petitions of priests or women who ask me with insistence to dedicate France to the Sacred Heart."⁴ By the 29th of August a majority in the Ministry demanded the censorship of Clemenceau's articles, but no one dared to take the responsibility and so for the time being no action was taken against Clemenceau.⁵

On August 30th, Gallieni again discussed the urgency of the military situation and pressed the Cabinet to take steps to leave Paris immediately. Dubost presented himself as spokesman for the Clemenceau-inspired opposition, declaring that the Cabinet was not able to leave the capital without a vote of the Legislature, since the state of public powers had been fixed at Paris by the law of 1879. Therefore, if the government wanted to leave, it must call Parliament and submit a law for this change. In order to quiet any fears of the Prime Minister concerning a possible revolt against his leadership, Dubost asserted that the government need have no fear that the Chambers would threaten the *union sacrée* by a debate on military operations, but instead they would recover easily the unanimity of August 4th and would strengthen the government by a new parliamentary manifestation of cooperation.

In refutation of Dubost's claims that a meeting of Parliament was necessary, Poincaré declared that the immediate situation did not call for a permanent transfer of the public power, but rather for a temporary change of residence to some place outside of Paris. Moreover, the move, which would be made for the sake of military expediency alone, was justified by precedent, since the Ministry upon several occasions of national emergency

³ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 211-217.

⁴ Samné, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150.

⁵ Saurez, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-157.

had met outside Paris. Poincaré felt, too, that a summoning of Parliament would give rise to conjectures which would be apt to prove most troublesome. Many people would undoubtedly decide that the government was on the point of demanding peace, a conclusion which would be particularly disheartening for the troops in the line of battle.

Dubost, whose attitude had probably been more the product of Clemenceau's efforts than the result of personal conviction, saw the pertinency of Poincaré's position and withdrew his demand for a convocation of the legislature. Under the influence of Poincaré, he now shifted so far to the other side that he demanded a decree of closure for the session, but practically the entire Cabinet opposed him on this point. Viviani, Ribot, and Sembat, all expressed the fear that an immediate decree of closure would alarm the public greatly.⁶ For this reason the Council again ignored Dubost's expressed desire and decided against a decree of closure. When told of this Ministerial action, Dubost tried to force his point of view upon the Ministers by threatening to call the Senate himself, if the government did not protect it by signing a decree of closure. Since Dubost actually had the legal power to put through his threat, some compromise had to be made. The final agreement was a promise by Viviani that a decree of closure would be issued if the government would be forced to leave Paris. At the suggestion of the Socialists, Guesde and Sembat, it was also specified that in that case, the decree would be justified by the impossibility of calling the two Chambers, in full, since a large part of the representatives were enlisted in the Army.⁷

Viviani was inclined to blame the actions of Dubost in this affair on Clemenceau, but Poincaré, on the other hand, felt that Dubost's opposition had been his own.⁸ Whether Dubost's attitude was his own or Clemenceau's, the latter's vindictive attacks on the government and the command continued to grow in violence. He reproached Poincaré for not having handled the war communications properly. He advanced charges of inefficiency and mismanagement against Millerand, the Minister of War. On August 29th, one of his most bitter defeatist articles appeared.⁹

"Our armies seem to be turned around, from what they say of them. When the communiqué appeared, *De la Somme aux Vosges*, everyone demanded, How did we get there from the German frontier? What sequence of checks explains this situation? Look at the map, readers, and try to comprehend for what the small word, the Somme, ought to prepare you? I dare not say any more. Where do they intend to lead us?"

⁶ Clemenceau's accusation that Gallieni was preparing a commune also reappeared in this discussion.

⁷ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 215-217.

⁸ " 'From all evidences,' Viviani told me, 'it's Clemenceau who started Dubost.' 'Possible, but on occasion Dubost well knows how to move himself.' " (Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 217.)

⁹ Michon, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-157.

On August 31st, Clemenceau wrote:

"From all parts of France, the pitiful flocks of fugitives are leaving their villages in flames before the fire of the Germans. What can we say of these unhappy villages, villages that were flourishing yesterday, but today are ruins. Let us have no illusions. The Germans maintain a great superiority of numbers and of training. Let us not abandon ourselves to premature hopes. The offensive will continue, endlessly terrible. If the worst comes true, as it well may, our country will submit to ordeals beyond those that it has known in the worst time of our history."¹⁰

On September 1st a communication was received by the government which served to show without a shadow of a doubt the demoralizing results of Clemenceau's pen. Clemenceau had published in *L'Homme libre* some articles against the sending of Territorials to Morocco. In regard to the effect of these articles on the troops, a French General at Casablanca wrote:

"Clemenceau made violent, untrue statements, which caused great damage to the discipline and authority of the command. We must have a truce during the war. It is impossible for me to exercise my command and to continue to perform a task so heavy and thankless, if a person so notorious in the state continues to propagate disorder and lack of discipline. For the morale of the territorials, it is my duty as a responsible leader to demand formally that the government stop this demoralizing campaign, through the means given it by the state of siege."

In answer to this appeal the government finally decided to apply a rigid censorship against Clemenceau if he would not stop his anti-government campaign on his own account.¹¹

By August 31st, the Cabinet realized that its decision in regard to its removal from Paris could no longer be postponed. The retreat was continuing, and the military situation was steadily growing worse. On the other hand the morale of the French citizenry was being constantly undermined by the unremitting attacks of Clemenceau and the defeatists. In the face of this situation Poincaré, supported by Sembat and Ribot, declared himself still definitely opposed to leaving Paris. He felt that such an action would be the last step in exposing Paris to complete despair and perhaps to revolution. Ribot also was most reluctant toward moving the seat of government. He expressed himself as preferring to await the battle that would inevitably develop before the walls of Paris, leaving only if defeat made it absolutely necessary.

Millerand was the spokesman for the group supporting the military command, which considered the departure of the government both indispensable and urgent. The command did not want to accept the responsibility of letting the government be captured, since the Germans were able to cross the Seine and cut the railroad lines back of Paris. It felt that it was senseless to expose to this risk all the central administrative organs on which

¹⁰ Charles Maurras wrote in *L'Action Française*: "The history of the month that has just passed will name Clemenceau the most malicious of all Frenchmen."

¹¹ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 234-235.

depend the life of the country, and that the presence of the government in Paris would serve simply as a temptation to the Germans. In appealing to Poincaré, Millerand declared: "One's duty consists sometimes of letting oneself be accused of cowardice. It takes more courage to face the reproaches of the crowd than to run the risk of being killed." Moreover, the combination of circumstances everywhere was gradually weakening Poincaré's decision. An English officer informed him that the English Army needed eight days to reorganize, because of the heavy losses it had been suffering. At the same time the German march toward Paris seemed to be speeding up. The Russian situation was getting worse as a German offensive with fresh troops was launched in East Prussia. Moreover, and probably most important of all, no one had forgotten what had happened in 1870, for then the French government had been caught in Paris, and its surrender had meant the end of the war. France certainly did not want a repetition of that event.

On September 2nd, in the meeting of the Council, Poincaré tried for the last time to have the departure of the government postponed. Millerand still urged an immediate departure, since on the day before the Germans had passed Compiègne, and were rapidly approaching Chantilly. He declared that the French Army was being reorganized and that in the coming battle the government would only be in the way of military operations if it remained in Paris. He quoted Gallieni: "Paris is able to be defended only by an Army which will fight outside of the walls." Confronted by a Cabinet unanimous except for the Socialists who desired a defense to the bitter end, Poincaré at last gave in and also signed the decree to close Parliament as he had promised Dubost. He expressed himself averse, however, to a secret departure at night, and was seconded in this by Ribot: "A secret departure at night resembles a flight too much." But the decision of the military administration for an immediate departure carried more weight, and therefore the French government left Paris the evening of September 2nd in complete secrecy. None of the citizens of Paris knew until the next morning that their government had deserted them. Poincaré, in his memoirs, claims that he was still reluctant to leave.¹²

"All events contribute to give the dismal impression of an official exodus, discharged in the approved way, but submissive on the other hand to a military discipline."¹³

The entire administrative machinery of France was not, however, moved at this moment.¹⁴ Only the members of the Cabinet left Paris; the heads of the departments remained as did the civil officers of Paris, continuing their functions as usual, but under the authority of the Military Governor

¹² Neither the minister of war nor Poincaré had yet noticed the change of direction of Kluck's army; if they had, the departure from Paris would have been postponed at this time and would thus never have taken place. (Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V., pp. 217-226.)

¹³ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 235-237.

¹⁴ *Le Figaro*, September 3rd.

of Paris.¹⁵ Before leaving Paris, Viviani prepared a manifesto, which appeared the next morning, September 3rd, in all the French papers as an explanation of the government's departure and as an appeal to all for co-operation with the military government of Gallieni.

"Since Paris is to be put in a state of an entrenched camp and is to be included in the zone placed under the orders of the commander in chief of the armies of the north east, it seemed advisable both to the military and to the civil authority to move the seat of government to a place where it would be free to operate and organize resistance, to remain in permanent contact with all parts of the government . . . to keep open its line of communication with the outside. . . . Every possible measure is being taken and will be taken for the defense of the city; we ask only that the Parisian population maintain its customary calm, resolution, and self control. . . . Because of the government's move to Bordeaux, there will inevitably be a more general exodus of the civil population. The Commander-in-Chief, the Army, and the entrenched camp of Paris will thus be able to manage more easily the forces at their disposal for the defense of the capital. . . . For some time the currency and transferable securities deposited in the safes of the Bank of France have been deposited in a safe place; the usual business of the Bank, however, will continue to be administered under Ministerial decree, as will also the postal, telegraph, and telephone services."¹⁶

On the same day Gallieni issued his famous proclamation which asked the people of France for their support and gave his promise "to carry out the mandate of defending Paris *jusqu'au bout*."¹⁷

The potentialities of disorder in this drastic move of the government were tremendous; no one had any way at all of knowing what the response of the citizenry would be. The action of the government had come as a complete surprise to all, and it would not have been surprising if a panic had broken out in Paris and engulfed the entire country in an overwhelming tide of defeatism. Although everyone realized that the presence of the Ministry in Paris constituted a very real point of weakness, nevertheless the picture of a government running away from danger in the night was not particularly encouraging. Under these circumstances the behavior of the people of Paris was extremely praiseworthy. It certainly was not the easiest course of action to remain calmly in a place from which those in authority had precipitously withdrawn without a word of warning, and the fact that the Parisians accepted so coolly the action of the government spoke well for their self-control, especially since they had been kept in almost entire ignorance of the progress of military operations.¹⁸ Without this *sang-froid* a panic might easily have broken out.¹⁹

¹⁵ Mme. Poincaré had planned to stay to help with the wounded, but upon the pressing demand of Viviani, the Council decided that all wives of Ministers should accompany their husbands to Bordeaux (Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 235-242.)

¹⁶ *Le Figaro*, September 3rd.

¹⁷ *Le Journal*, September 3rd.

¹⁸ *Le Figaro*, September 4th.

¹⁹ This coolness was the more remarkable since the "retrenched camp" of Paris was bound to become the center of the battle to serve as a point of support for the military operations, either on the left, or on the right wing, according to the plan of procedure which would be decided upon.

Of the several factors which aided the maintenance of order in Paris at this time, one of the most important was the fact that the events of 1870 were fixed indelibly in the minds of all. Paris was determined that history should not repeat itself.²⁰ The situation also had its dramatic appeal, for Paris saw herself as the savior of the nation toward whom the eyes of every Frenchman would be turned as she offered herself for the safety of the nation. Nevertheless, the press felt it to be its duty to keep up the morale of the Parisians by constant reiteration of the high mission bestowed upon the capital in the defense of the country.

"Paris accepts gladly the rôle which has been assigned to it, namely to show endurance and readiness for any sacrifice which may be called for. It matters little that its chiefs have departed, for Paris thinks only: 'So much the better, if France is to conquer more quickly'. . . . It really takes much more courage to stay away from Paris in these days than to remain in it, everyone away from the capital is so concerned about it and wishes only to return to be in the center of things again."²¹

Perhaps, however, the most important factor which aided the morale of the Parisians was the general confidence felt by all in the military leadership and ability of General Gallieni, the Military Governor of Paris.

"One observes in Gallieni constantly the union of wisdom and audacity, the firm purpose of maintaining, in any case, public order, more indispensable even under the fire of the enemy than in the peaceful course of every day life, an equal aptitude for brilliant works of combat and for works no less important in which the efficient administration of civil affairs is involved."²²

The orderly behavior of the Parisians at this dangerous juncture surprised most observers. Maybe the rapidity of the German action had stunned the population, maybe the fact that a republic was already in evidence and that the radical workers of Paris could hardly revolt against their own form of government accounted for their action; whatever the reason for the lack of unrest, even Poincaré could not hide his surprise.

"Despite the departure of the government and the approach of the Germans, Paris is calm; the nation remains united around those who have the weighty mission of directing it."

On September 5th, the editors of *Le Temps* announced their decision to follow the government to Bordeaux. Confronted by the same dilemma as the government of justifying this move without alarming the public, they hurried to assure their readers that they would much prefer to remain in Paris "in order to direct the public opinion of the capital and to aid in its noble effort." However, they explained:

"We are ceding to the entreaties of those who have demonstrated to us that our mission is different, that France has need of a newspaper which will interpret French thought for the provinces and other countries as the other papers, which will remain in Paris, will do

²⁰ *Le Temps*, September 4th.

²¹ *Le Temps*, September 5th.

²² *Le Temps*, September 4th.

for the capital. Moreover, much greater freedom of expression can be secured away from the capital, which is under the control of a military government. Thus our efforts will be much more useful in Bordeaux than in Paris since we will be in a better capacity to follow the events taking place all over Europe."²³

Since *Le Temps* was generally considered semi-official, its place was naturally with the government.²⁴

The reception at Bordeaux of President Poincaré and the Ministers had been very orderly and without incident. Each Ministry was established in a different building with direct telephone and telegraph connections with the military government of Paris.²⁵ Although the governmental declaration had asked the members of Parliament not to consider themselves dismissed, not many of them were able to go with the government. A large number were in active military service, and many others were busy with their local duties as mayors or general councilors in their departments.²⁶

The subsequent behavior of the French government at Bordeaux was as disillusioning as the splendid unanimity with which the population of Paris had accepted its abrupt departure had been encouraging. France was faced with the most serious crisis in her history since 1870, her very existence was being threatened and her troops were still retreating. If ever there was a time when a country needed to be able to have confidence in its government, this was it. But even so, French party strife refused to be submerged. French politicians continued to bicker for their own selfish purposes even though their country was being invaded right in front of them. Some formalists were still declaring that the transfer of the government to Bordeaux by a simple governmental decision was illegal since the seat of the government had been fixed by law.²⁷

In accordance with his promise to Dubost, Poincaré had signed the decree of closure as soon as the governmental decision to move to Bordeaux had been made. The next day, however, Viviani confessed to Poincaré that he would prefer not to enforce it. Briand and Millerand, on the other hand, feared that if the Chambers remained in session, even without being assembled, various partisan intrigues might arise to cause trouble. Consequently under this pressure Viviani was forced to publish the decree as originally planned. As early as September 4th, however, it became evident to Poincaré that a small cabal had already been formed by some politicians who had followed the government to Bordeaux and who now demanded that the decree of closure be recalled.²⁸ The crowning insult of

²³ *Le Temps*, September 5th.

²⁴ *Le Figaro* remained in Paris, but divided its editorial staff, a smaller edition appearing in Bordeaux. (*Le Figaro*, September 10th.)

²⁵ *Le Figaro*, September 4th.

²⁶ *Le Figaro*, September 5th.

²⁷ *Le Temps*, September 8th.

²⁸ Press despatches from Bordeaux in regard to the growing opposition declared that "a small tempest is blowing in the 'verre d'eau parlementaire'." (*Le Temps*, September 8th.)

the whole incident was the fact that Dubost himself, the President of the Senate, now appeared as the opponent of his own decree. If left alone, Viviani might have recalled this decree, but Ribot, Delcassé, and Millerand were all very much opposed to this change of attitude, declaring that the only legal way of reopening the session would be a call for a new session. The government, therefore, decided not to change its policy for the time being.²⁹

The press disapproved strongly of these various small intrigues which marked the beginning of a parliamentary opposition, expressing its extreme surprise that anyone would choose such an inopportune time for propagating internal agitation. It dismissed as absurd the statement that the legislature should have been called in order to give its consent to the transfer of the government to Bordeaux.³⁰ In time of war the question of the defense and safety of France should be uppermost in the minds of everyone, to the complete exclusion of all thoughts of petty controversy. In general, the opinion was held that the government, rather than being guilty of taking unto itself too much power, had transgressed on the other side and neglected to assert its authority when it should have. In fact, because of this tentative opposition which had begun to develop in Bordeaux, a complete reorganization of the government had been delayed, a reorganization which the move to Bordeaux had made imperative. The press felt that this hesitation was a mark of compromise which had not been appreciated by the opposition and had worked to the disadvantage of the government.³¹

On September 6th, Viviani complained in a meeting of the Council of Ministers that he was constantly beset by Senators and Deputies who did not like the decree of closure. He expressed his appreciation of the fact that these Deputies had offered their services to the government, but since they all wanted some important position in the government, these requests turned out to be rather embarrassing. Representing one of the few remaining parties not yet participating in the *union sacrée* government, Denys Cochin, one of the leaders of the *Action Libérale*, had been one of the most ardent solicitors of offices, desiring above all to become Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Even Poincaré supported Cochin, since he still desired the active participation in the Cabinet of a prominent member of the Right in order to bring the Ministry even more toward its ideal of *union sacrée*. But in spite of the fact that Cochin's offer of cooperation showed the desire of the Catholics in France to participate in the defense of the Republic, Viviani maintained his opposi-

²⁹ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 245-246.

³⁰ *Le Temps* could not resist the temptation to remind the government that on August 4th, when the parliamentary session had been adjourned, *Le Temps* had offered the suggestion that the government would do better to close the session rather than just to adjourn it. (*Le Temps*, September 8th).

³¹ *Le Temps*, September 8th.

tion, and the offer was refused.³² Apparently the rumor spread that the government had asked Cochin to take part in the Cabinet and that the Catholic leader had bargained for a particular position, for he found it necessary to give an explanatory statement to the press on September 10th. He declared that the initiative had been all on his side and that his only motive had been that of "soliciting the honor for my career and my party of collaborating in any department in the government of national defense."³³

Some more political tension was created by the sudden appearance of Doumer on the political scene. On September 4th, Poincaré received a communication from Gallieni, declaring that he was going to give certain civil duties in Paris to Doumer, former President of the Chamber of Deputies.³⁴ This decision did not come as a complete surprise to Poincaré, for on September 1st, Doumer, while complaining that no one had asked for his services and expressing a dislike for Messimy, Millerand, and Joffre, had revealed that he admired Gallieni greatly and that if the government should leave Paris he would like to remain in Paris in active cooperation with Gallieni.³⁵ When the matter of the Doumer appointment came up in a Council meeting, Millerand approved the action of Gallieni, but many members of the Council, remembering Doumer's not too trustworthy political reputation and his inclination towards authoritarianism, opposed the entrusting of an important administrative position without any delimitation of power to a politician. Millerand told Gallieni of the general sentiment of the Cabinet, but Gallieni's reply: "The government will be tempted to resign, if it does not receive the liberty of having recourse to the collaboration of M. Doumer," left acceptance the only course of action possible for Viviani. His reply evidenced his misgivings however.

"If you judge it indispensable to join to you the person of whom you speak, the government must leave to you the responsibility of this decision, but it demands that this person exercise no authority over the prefects who ought to remain directly under your order."³⁶

Even this precaution was found insufficient by many members of the government, in particular, the Socialists, who suggested that this incident might be straightened out by delegating two Ministers to Paris, provisionally or even permanently. This suggestion was not acted upon, however, for it was felt that, even though the German Army had changed its direction to the East of Paris and the government might therefore with safety return, the entire government was rather bound to remain in Bordeaux for the time being. It had left Gallieni in charge when crisis

³² Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 259.

³³ *Le Figaro*, September 10th.

³⁴ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 251-252.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

was threatening; duty compelled it now to remain in Bordeaux and accept Gallieni's actions.

This decision, however, did not end the Doumer affair. In order to procure for Doumer the "benevolent neutrality" of the Republicans—and incidentally to observe the general staff of civilians around Gallieni—Sembat proposed that one of the younger Socialist Deputies, Albert Thomas, should be sent to Paris. The suggestion was approved, the trip made, and on September 7th, Thomas returned with his report. He divulged the fact that *la Guerre Sociale*, a paper directed by Hervé, formerly anti-militarist, and now an extreme nationalist, had secured the collaboration of one of Doumer's secretaries, M. Lichtenberger, and was not only slandering the Ministers and Parliament, but also beginning to advocate a dictatorship. Poincaré confessed that this announcement made him dread a *coup d'état* or a *pronunciamiento* and advocated an immediate return of the government to Paris.

The vague apprehensions established by Thomas were increased by an article of the irrepressible Clemenceau which appeared at this time. It accused the military government of Paris of preparing a *commune* with his civil adviser, Doumer, as leader.³⁷ The government, now greatly alarmed, demanded explanations from Gallieni. The latter replied that he had been overwhelmed with work, when on September 4th, Doumer had approached him with the proposal that he should transfer to him all questions of civil order, supplies, security, supervision of strangers, and counter espionage. Consequently he had accepted this offer and the new civil service had been inaugurated that day, a service which could be suppressed only with serious inconvenience.

"I would not know how to rejoice too much in the collaboration that I have always found with Doumer and his Bureaus, who strive always to clear me of questions able to disturb me or to trouble my preoccupation with military order. I have the final decision at all times, but I am no longer required to occupy myself with details. Doumer brings me always the solution of a matter at the same time as he brings the knowledge of its existence. And I am able to add—in order to silence the scruples of men who with some reluctance have seen me utilizing the great capacities of Doumer at a moment when there was merit in remaining in Paris menaced by investment—that there has never been any question of politics between us. He has given me his most devoted and energetic cooperation on all the questions concerning the state of defense and organization of the 'retrenched camp'. His aid permitted me, when our garrison was reduced to three incomplete divisions and the Germans were only 80 kilometers from Paris, to establish our line of battle, for he came to an agreement with the various trade unions whereby he procured for me the 15,000 workers which were necessary to manage the task. In brief, during this period all the activity in connection with putting Paris in a state of defense, supplying the population with food, making factories ready to furnish munitions and equipment necessary for the armies, there has been nothing for which Doumer has not given me the most uninterrupted, intelligent, and entirely efficient cooperation."³⁸

³⁷ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 266-267.

³⁸ Samné, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-7.

Whether or not Gallieni himself was in reality working toward a dictatorship is a moot question. It was inevitable though that he should wonder if the moment would not come, when circumstances would demand the establishment of a dictatorship, for his army training and fiery temperament did not tolerate any opposition. The presence of Doumer, whose ambitions were known to everyone did not serve to reassure the government at Bordeaux.

In these critical days before the Battle of the Marne, talk of dictatorship was constantly stirring, especially among the many politicians who remembered the fears aroused by the Dreyfus affair. Even the Commander-in-Chief, Joffre, was not above suspicion. Constantly reiterating his demand for complete freedom of military actions, Joffre was in fact a veritable dictator at the beginning of the war. The civilian authorities assisted him only feebly, and it took years of negotiations to recover for the civil government some of the authority which the army had assumed at this time. If it had not been for the fortunate outcome of the Battle of the Marne, the existence of the Parliamentary Republic might indeed have been endangered. In fact, in the actual circumstances, it was only the presence of Poincaré at the helm of the Republic which made tolerable the relationship between the Army and the civil government. Poincaré's political career, his conservatism, his unquestionable patriotism inspired confidence in the leaders of the army and kept the latter from criticizing politicians too openly.³⁹ In spite of these conservative qualities, Poincaré was nevertheless a confirmed Republican, who objected to the ascendancy of the Army over the civil authorities. In order to accomplish this purpose, Poincaré felt that great activity of the civil authorities was needed. He insisted constantly that the morale of the nation might be improved by his presence at the front. On September 13th he threatened to carry out his plans even against the opposition of the Cabinet and announced that he would take this trip all by himself, thus breaking with the custom which associated at least one Minister to the President of the Republic in all his travels. Apparently even this threat was not enough to win over the Ministers who, as former political opponents of the President, probably feared that such a trip might increase the prestige of Poincaré too much. It was not until after the military crisis had passed that Poincaré was permitted to go to his long postponed task.⁴⁰

Thus even during the critical days of the Battle of the Marne, September 9-14th, the French Republic was torn by internal dissension.⁴¹ To the

³⁹ Samné, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-9.

⁴⁰ Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 282.

⁴¹ A description of the social life at Bordeaux can be found in Poincaré's memoirs. "*Bordeaux, envahi par des Parisiens de tout genre, ressemble en ce moment a une ville de plaisir: les ministres donnent eux-memes un lamentable exemple, en dînant avec des actrices dans des salles de restaurant.*" (Poincaré, R., *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 280.)

world at large it was represented as a *union sacrée* but under the surface the old political division continued as usual.⁴² It could hardly be said that France was saved by the coolness and self-sacrifice of its politicians for neither one of these qualities was very much in evidence. In fact, the French Republic survived these days of ordeal in the first place because of the genius of Joffre, who after his first mistakes, had been able to organize an orderly retreat and return to the attack at the psychological moment, and in the second place because of the unusual *sang-froid* of the population of Paris, which in spite of the desertion of the government refused to follow the precedent set in August 1792 and September 1870.⁴³

After the defeat of the Germans, criticisms of the government became less violent. Even Clemenceau threw one of his most vituperative articles into the waste basket and instead wrote a headline in an almost mystical style: "A new order of man is going to come from this decisive day."⁴⁴ One of the main beneficiaries of the Battle of the Marne was the Viviani government. Not even solidly established after the changes of August 25th, Viviani could now justify all of his actions with the military success which had occurred. Temporarily the advantageous military situation made successful criticism rather difficult. Hopes were again arising for an early French victory. In such favorable circumstances, the *union sacrée* became, for the first time, a reality.⁴⁵ But when the Germans were not driven out of France, and when the war seemed to develop into a *saulemate*, the ineradicable individualism of the French politicians was going to assert itself once more to culminate in the division and the defeatism of 1917.

⁴² *Le Figaro*, September 11th.

⁴³ *Le Figaro*, September 13th.

⁴⁴ Suarez, Georges, *op. cit.*, pp. 452-454.

⁴⁵ It was at this time that such men as Anatole France and Tailhade offered their services to the government, "All former opponents of militarism are now filled with an entirely new spirit." (Welschinger, Henri, "Souvenirs de Bordeaux," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Paris, 1914, pp. 68-80.)

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